STARSHIP TROOPERS

based on the novel by Robert Heinlein
screenplay by Edward Neumeier

THIRD DRAFT
WORK IN PROGRESS
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FROM THE FEDERAL NET -- NOTICE -- JOIN UP NOW!

Proud YOUNG PEOPLE in uniform, the bloom of human evolution.

YOUNG PEOPLE
I'm doing my part... Me, too... Are you?

The Mobile Infantry logo: LIGHTNING BOLTS ON A BLACK SHIELD.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Join the Mobile Infantry and save the world! Service guarantees citizenship. Would you like to know more?

BUG METEOR!

Behold actual pictures of a METEOR, this one a mile across, as it hurtles past an observation ship.

OFFICIAL VOICE
The bugs send another meteor our way!

A BRIGHT EXPLOSION in space out beyond the moon.

OFFICIAL VOICE
But this time, we're ready! Planetary defenses are better than ever! Would you like to know more?

KLENDATHU -- WHY WE HAVE TO FIGHT!

Klendathu, a fierce orange planet ringed by an asteroid belt, orbits a double star.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Klendathu, source of the bug meteor attacks, orbits a twin star system whose brutal gravitational forces produce an unlimited supply of meteorites...

A "You Are Here" map of the KNOWN GALAXY shows the Earth in relationship to the BUG PLANETARY SYSTEM and Klendathu.

OFFICIAL VOICE
To ensure the safety of our solar system, Klendathu must be eliminated! Would you like to know more?

LIVE BROADCAST -- FROM ORBIT -- THE INVASION OF KLENDATHU!

Four BATTLE GROUPS, sixty STARSHIPS strong, orbit the orange planet. Graphics: KLENDATHU: THE INVASION.

OFFICIAL VOICE
We break net now and take you live to Klendathu where the invasion has begun!

EXT KLENDATHU -- NIGHT -- THE CAMERA

takes in Mobile Infantry CAP TROOPERS wearing fully armed Marauder POWER SUITS as they move up the line, then PANS to the NET CORRESPONDENT.

NET CORRESPONDENT
We've just landed here on what cap troopers are calling "Big K" with the 6th Mobile Infantry Division... It's an ugly planet, a bug planet, a planet hostile to life as we know iGKKKKKK!

Blood hits the lens as the Correspondent is cut in half. The CAMERA catches a glimpse of HUGE CLAWS as Cap Trooper JOHNNY RICO, 18, blows away SOMETHING BIG with his pulse cannon.

JOHNNY
Com'on, let's go! ON THE BOUNCE!

The cap troopers move out, among them DIZZY FLORES, 18, ACE LEVY, 19, and KITTEN SMITH, 18. The CAMERA pauses, unsure.

FED NET CENTRAL (O.S.)
FOLLOW THEM...! GO! GO!

The CAMERA follows. The PULSE of BUG BATTERIES is blinding. Cap Troopers scream as they are torn apart right and left by an enemy seen only in disorienting glimpses.

JOHNNY
THIS WAY!

The group splits into two, and the CAMERA follows Johnny. Something slices Kitten Smith, and he goes down screaming.

JOHNNY
KITTEN!

Johnny stops to help his comrade. A CLAW slashes into him.

JOHNNY
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Now something grabs the CAMERA, spinning it around. We glimpse the hideous JAWS of an ARACHNID WARRIOR.

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

The CAMERA hits the ground. Johnny, badly wounded, bleeding from the mouth, crawls into CAMERA, trying to get away from the dark INSECT SHAPES that close in on him.

JOHNNY
Oh, God... Oh, God, help me... please help me...

His eyes glaze over as he remembers.

FLASHBACK:

INT NEW UNI HIGH -- CLASSROOM -- DAY -- CARMEN IBANEZ

is beautiful, just 18, and quite pleased with herself because Johnny Rico is clearly infatuated with her.

RASCZAK (O.S.)
The end of another school year, and for me no doubt another failure... Rico, pay attention!

The teacher, JEAN RASCZAK, 38, a rugged veteran who proudly displays his missing hand, scowls at Johnny, bemused.

JOHNNY
Sorry, Mr. Rasczak.

But as soon as Rasczak turns back to the class, Johnny begins to sketch a cartoon on his desk's touch screen.

RASCZAK
Here in History and Moral Philosophy we've explored the decline of Democracy when social scientists brought the world to the brink of chaos, and how the veterans took control and imposed a stability that has lasted for generations since... You know these facts, but have I taught you anything of value? You. Why are only citizens allowed to vote?

Rasczak points at LANNY, 17, with his stump.

LANNY
It's a reward... what the Federation gives you for doing Federal Service.

Rasczak is crestfallen, makes a big show of patience.

RASCZAK
No. Something given has no value! Haven't I taught you dimwits anything? I guess they oughta revoke my teaching credential...

Laughter. Johnny's cartoon, meanwhile, is taking shape: Johnny and Carmen flying round planet Venus in a space ship.

RASCZAK
When you vote, you're exercising political authority. You're using force. And force, my friends, is violence, the supreme authority from which all other authority derives.

CARL JENKINS, 18, a superintelligent geek, jumps in.

CARL
Gee, we always thought you were the supreme authority, Mr. Rasczak.

Laughter. Rasczak grins.

RASCZAK
In my classroom, you bet. Whether it's exerted by ten or ten billion, political authority is violence by degree. The people we call citizens have <u>earned</u> the right to wield it.

DIZZY FLORES, 18, athletic, pretty, no nonsense, chimes in.

DIZZY
My mother always says that violence never solves anything.

RASCZAK
Really? I wonder what the city fathers of Hiroshima would have to say about that. You.

Rasczak points at Carmen.

CARMEN
They probably wouldn't say anything. Hiroshima was destroyed.

Johnny presses "SEND" on his desk, and the cartoon appears across the way on Carmen's screen.

RASCZAK
Correct. Naked force has settled more issues in history than any other factor. The contrary opinion, 'violence never solves anything,' is wishful thinking at its worst.

When Rasczak looks away, Carmen throws Johnny her wonderful smile, and Johnny's gone, checked out, flying round Venus.

RASCZAK
People who forget that always pay... They pay with ther lives and their freedom!

Dizzy notices the dreamy look on Johnny's face. So does Rasczak. He points at him with his stump, snaps Johnny to.

RASCZAK
You. Tell me the moral difference, if any, between the citizen and the civilian?

JOHNNY
The difference lies in the field of civic virtue. A citizen accepts personal responsibility for the safety of the body politic, of which he is a member, defending it, if need be, with his life. The civilian does not.

RASCZAK
The exact words of the text. But do you understand it? Do you BELIEVE it?

JOHNNY
Uh, I don't know.

RASCZAK
Of course you don't. I doubt if any of you here would recognize 'civic virtue' if it bit you on the ass!

A bell rings. Rasczak shrugs, indifferent.

RASCZAK
Well, that's it. Have a nice life.

EXT NEW UNI HIGH -- HALLWAY -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND CARMEN

walk with their friends. Several COUPLES hold hands. Johnny tries to take Carmen's hand, but she demurs. Johnny broods.

CARMEN
C'mon, let's see if they've posted the math final yet.

STUDENT
Hey, Rico, we gonna take Tesla?

JOHNNY
How should I know?

STUDENT
You're captain of the team!

EXT QUAD -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND CARMEN

join other students around a MULTI-SCREEN KIOSK.

CARMEN
First thing Fleet Academy looks at is your math scores. Wish me luck!

Carmen enters her name, receives her score: 97%! She beams.

JOHNNY
Good for you.

CARMEN
Your turn...

Then she spots Carl across the way talking with MARCO, 17.

CARMEN
Hold on... I wanna talk to Marco. His sister's at Fleet!

Carmen rushes off. Johnny checks his score: 35%! Crushed, he makes sure no one else has seen. Carl walks up to him.

CARL
You still haven't kissed her yet? Don't lie.

JOHNNY
What's the hurry?

CARL
Others are waiting.

Carl points out Dizzy, talking with friends.

JOHNNY
Did you read her mind?

CARL
Don't have to... some mating semaphore is pretty hard to miss.

It's true. You can tell by the way she looks at Johnny.

JOHNNY
Yeah, but I want Carmen.

CARL
You got it bad.

Carmen returns to Johnny as Carl heads off.

CARL
Don't forget about this afternoon.
(to Carmen)
He's always late when he walks you home to fish for a kiss.

Carmen blushes, covers.

CARMEN
She's flying starships!

JOHNNY
Who?

CARMEN
Marco's sister. Can you imagine maneuvering half a million tons through crowded space lanes... You gotta have nerves of steel! Reflexes are critical.

JOHNNY
I have good reflexes.

Carmen notices the way Dizzy's looking at Johnny, doesn't like it one bit, takes Johnny's arm.

CARMEN
C'mon, Johnny, we'll be late for Biology.

INT BIOLOGY LAB -- DAY -- THE BIOLOGY TEACHER

is an older woman, very spry, also blind. Johnny, Carmen and other students gather around covered lab tables.

BIOLOGY TEACHER
For our final today, please identify the mouthparts, the abdominal organs, and for extra credit, locate the nerve cord and count the ganglia. You may begin.

The students remove the covers to reveal large alien bugs, 60 centimeter ARKELLIAN SAND BEETLES laid out for dissection.

CARMEN
Eeuch!

JOHNNY
Aw, c'mon, it's just a bug.

BIOLOGY TEACHER
Just a bug, eh? We humans like to think we are Nature's finest achievement. I'm afraid it isn't true. This Arkellian Sand Beetle is superior in many ways. It has fewer moving parts, can reproduce itself in vast numbers, and unbound by concerns of ego and mortality, makes the perfect selfless member of society.

JOHNNY
Better put your goggles on.

Johnny slices the abdomen open with a surgical laser. Green fluid sprays from the slit. Carmen turns away, looking ill.

BIOLOGY TEACHER
Our galaxy is teaming with insect life. We have identified over two billion species so far. Human life, it would seem, is the anomaly.

CARMEN
But we're intelligent. Human minds have invented art, mathematics and interstellar travel.

BIOLOGY TEACHER
True, we know of no insect society that has produced a Shakespeare, an Einstein or a Cherynkov, but before you let that go to your head, take the example of the Arachnids, a highly organized, highly evolved insect society.

She points to an insect evolution chart that starts with a common ant and ends with a two meter tall ARACHNID WARRIOR.

BIOLOGY TEACHER
They are relatively stupid by human standards. Workers have an IQ of 12, warriors around 35, and yet the Arachnids have colonized planets. Over a million years of evolution, Nature has provided the Arachnids with the biological means to hurl their spore into space.

Johnny applies a spreader and jacks the insect's abdominal cavity open with a resounding crack. Bug guts gush out.

JOHNNY
Well, if that's the crop, that must be the gastric caecal...

CARMEN
Excuse me...!

She heads for the door, hand over her mouth.

EXT CIVIC PARK -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND CARMEN

walk home from school together.

JOHNNY
35% on the math final! No one could be that dumb with numbers.

CARMEN
Well, at least you didn't lose your lunch over a bug. How embarrassing.

JOHNNY
Who cares about bugs? You can't go anywhere if you don't know math.

CARMEN
Don't be so sure. I like you even if you are dumb with numbers.

JOHNNY
Then how come you won't hold hands with me at school?

CARMEN
I don't want everyone to see.

JOHNNY
Why won't you kiss me when we're all alone?

CARMEN
How come that's all you talk about anymore?

JOHNNY
It's all I ever think about anymore.

Indeed, they are alone now. The look in Johnny's eye says how about it. Carmen grins, reaches for Johnny's hand.

EXT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION -- DAY -- CARMEN

and Johnny stand together near a bank of TRANSPORTERS.

CARMEN
You can't walk me home.

JOHNNY
Why not?

CARMEN
I thought you were going to help Carl.

JOHNNY
Carl can wait.

CARMEN
Johnny, my Dad's home today.

Johnny's face darkens with frustration.

JOHNNY
What's he got against me... I mean, I'm a teenager. You can't be a citizen when you're only a teenager!

CARMEN
It's not you, Johnny. Your parents are rich, they don't need to be citizens, and that stuff means a lot to my dad. He's a veteran.

JOHNNY
Well, if your dad doesn't like me, how come we're such good friends?

CARMEN
Sometimes I do what I want, eh?

Carmen steps into the flux. ZAPPP! She's gone. Johnny grins, happy to be in love.

INT CARL'S HOUSE -- BASEMENT -- DAY -- JOHNNY

is hard-wired to the stacks of processing units that comprise Carl's basement workshop. Carl concentrates on the image of a playing card, the six of diamonds, displayed on a monitor.

CARL
Don't think about it... go on instinct.

JOHNNY
Ace of spades.

The ace of spades appears, and the computer indicates "no match". Carl puts another card up, the jack of diamonds.

CARL
Statistically speaking you should've accidentally guessed right by now.

JOHNNY
In addition to "psychic dolt" this test also proves I'm unlucky? Two of hearts.

Wrong again.

CARL
Luck's not a factor. No one really knows why some people are sensitive and some aren't. Federal studies like this one might provide a clue.

The next card up is the nine of clubs.

JOHNNY
I wouldn't want to know what everyone was thinking. Four of spades.

Suddenly, A GIANT YELLOW FROG jumps onto the keyboard, fritzing the monitor. Johnny removes the blindfold.

CARL
Cyrano, you big yellow turd!

Johnny knows this frog, scratches him on the neck.

JOHNNY
He just wants attention. You don't play with him like you used to.

Carl concentrates for a moment.

CARL
Go bug Mom, Cyrano.

Cyrano's eyes widen. He hops off the table and up the stairs two at a time. Carl clears the screen.

JOHNNY
How do you make him do that?

CARL
I gave him the impression that there was a fly crawling up my mom's leg. He's going to go eat it.

From upstairs, CARL'S MOM shrieks.

MOM (O.S.)
Get out! Get out! CARL...!

JOHNNY
Carl, promise me you won't ever do anything like that to me.

CARL
Don't be afraid. Can't do human... yet. C'mon, let's go.

Carl puts up more cards. Johnny misses them all.

JOHNNY
Ten of clubs. You still gonna sign up for Starside R&D?

CARL
Passport to the Universe. Who wouldn't want that?

JOHNNY
I've been thinking about applying for Federal Service, too. Fleet, maybe.

CARL
Your father'll never let you.

JOHNNY
I'm eighteen. It's my decision, I think I'd make a pretty good pilot. I've got great reflexes. You need that for maneuvering, you know.

CARL
Only 1 in 14 male applicants make it through stellar navigation. So what do you think your chances are?

JOHNNY
Eight point... no, uh, seven...

CARL
If you can't do those numbers, you haven't got a chance.

JOHNNY
All I know is Carmen's going to be a citizen, and I don't think it'll work out for us if I'm not.

CARL
Love... how excruciatingly pathetic. Now try and pay attention.

Carl puts a card up.

JOHNNY
Queen of hearts.

The computer indicates a match. Johnny peers around at the monitor. It is the Queen of hearts.

CARL
Well, whad'ya know about that!

EXT ATHLETIC FIELD -- STANDS -- DAY -- CARMEN

and other students wearing orange and black sing the "Uni High Song". The SCOREBOARD says: **REGIONAL FINAL.** Across the field, fans wear red and gold and sing another song.

INT LOCKER ROOM -- DAY -- JOHNNY

and other UNI HIGH TIGERS, all exceptionally robust young men and women, suit up in their orange and black uniforms.

DIZZY
Tesla's tough. They tumble good and they hit HARD.

Dizzy bounces a JUMP SHOE to Johnny. The spring fires and vaults it high into the air. Johnny catches it, puts it on, smiles cocky at the TESLA GIANTS who suit up in red and gold.

JOHNNY
We tumble good, too.

EXT ATHLETIC FIELD -- DAY -- WHAM! TIGERS AND GIANTS

collide. Powered by jump shoes, the play is gymnastic. Johnny moves the ball, flips high in the air over the Giant defensive line, makes ten meters before he is brought down.

EXT STANDS -- DAY -- THE CROWD

cheers as Johnny runs back to join his team. He sees Carmen waving, glad that Johnny has seen her among all the people.

INT HUDDLE -- DAY -- JOHNNY

and other Tigers listen as quarterback Dizzy calls the plays.

DIZZY
Kick three, fade left. On two.

They make fists, then break for the line of scrimmage.

EXT SCRIMMAGE LINE -- DAY -- THE TIGERS

have the ball. The Giant's QUARTERBACK assigns ZANDER BARCALOW, 18, handsome, super-confident, to guard Johnny.

ZANDER
Time's running out.

Zander points. The SCOREBOARD shows TIGERS 19, GIANTS 20, three minutes and counting on the clock. Johnny grins.

JOHNNY
A lot can happen in three minutes.

DIZZY
Hut... hut!

Johnny takes the handoff, flips over a gauntlet of Giant guards. Zander hurls himself at Johnny, misses. Johnny scores. Zander tumbles into the crowd, loses a jump shoe.

EXT SIDELINES -- DAY -- ZANDER

looks up and sees Carmen, smiling as she offers him a hand. She helps him up. He holds her hand longer than necessary.

CARMEN
Are you alright?

ZANDER
I'm getting better.

EXT ATHLETIC FIELD -- DAY -- JOHNNY

runs back to join his team as the crowd cheers. The Tigers lead 21-20. Johnny frowns when he sees Carmen talking to Zander on the sidelines, shaking his hand, smiling.

EXT SIDELINE -- DAY -- ZANDER

finds his shoe, straps it on.

ZANDER
So what are you doing later?

CARMEN
Everyone's going to the dance. Aren't you?

ZANDER
I don't know. It's my last night as a civilian. I ship out for Tereshkova tomorrow.

Zander heads for the field. Carmen follows, interested.

CARMEN
You're going to the Academy? That's where I want to go. I'd love to talk to you about that.

A REFEREE blows his whistle at Zander, signaling impatiently.

ZANDER
I'm all ears.

CARMEN
Don't you have to finish the game?

EXT SCRIMMAGE LINE -- DAY -- THE GIANTS

are in possession. Zander lands hard in front of Johnny.

JOHNNY
Don't get any ideas. She's my girl.

ZANDER
You can never be sure.

Johnny scowls at Zander, turns his head to look back at Carmen. She waves, smiling. The Giants pull a blitz.

DIZZY
WATCH THE BLITZ...!

Zander knocks Johnny on his ass, and the Giants score. It's TIGERS 21, GIANTS 22 and less than a minute to go.

EXT HUDDLE -- DAY -- DIZZY

orders up the next play. Johnny keeps looking over his shoulder because Zander's back talking to Carmen again.

DIZZY
Flip six, three hole. Rico? Hey!

Dizzy slams Johnny upside his helmet with her forearm.

JOHNNY
What?

DIZZY
You were drifting. Flip six, three hole. On one, got it?

JOHNNY
Just throw me the ball, Diz.

They make fists and break.

EXT SCRIMMAGE LINE -- DAY -- JOHNNY

takes position again across the line from Zander who now grins at Johnny broadly. Johnny doesn't grin back.

DIZZY
Hut!

At the snap, Johnny breaks for open field. Dizzy throws. Johnny catches it, trips Zander up painfully, and hurls himself into the end zone as a horn sounds the game's finish.

EXT ATHLETIC FIELD -- DAY -- CHEERING UNI FANS

rush onto the field as the school band strikes up a victory march. Tigers do flips in the air. Giants look dejected. Zander picks himself up, watches Johnny leave with Carmen.

INT JOHNNY'S HOUSE -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY

walks through rooms filled with elegant furniture. He's all spiffed up for the big dance. His MOTHER catches him preening in front of a mirror by the TRANSPORTER in the hall.

MOTHER
Who said you could grow up so fast? Last time I checked you were only five years old. You had such a bright little face...

JOHNNY
Aw, don't get mushy.

Johnny's FATHER enters carrying a FEDERAL SERVICE CATALOGUE.

FATHER
This came for you today. I presume at your request.

JOHNNY
A lot of my friends are doing Federal Service...

MOTHER
You aren't thinking of applying...?

Johnny shrugs.

FATHER
Have you lost your mind? I'd rather take ten lashes in Public Square than see you ruin your life.

JOHNNY
It's a term of service, not a career. I just want to get out on my own and see the Galaxy for a couple years.

MOTHER
Johnny, people get hurt... people get killed in the Federal Service. If something happened to you I don't know what I'd do...

FATHER
Who gave you this idea? It's that teacher. What's his name? You know the one I mean.

JOHNNY
Mr. Rasczak.

FATHER
Rasczak... Silly name. There ought to be a law against using a school as recruiting station!

JOHNNY
No, Mr. Rasczak doesn't do that at all. He sorta discourages you really.

FATHER
Good, because you're going to Harvard, and that's the end of it.

JOHNNY
I'm eighteen. It's my decision.

FATHER
Oh, is that how it is?

MOTHER
Wait you two. Dad and I have a surprise for you that will settle this. Can you guess what it is?

JOHNNY
Uh, no.

FATHER
A trip to the Outer Rings. Whad'ya think of that?

JOHNNY
Wow! Santori and Zegema Beach. I've always wanted to go there.

MOTHER
Good good, then it's all settled.

FATHER
A year at Harvard and you'll see this "Federal Service" is just menial training for inferior people so they can call themselves "citizens" and take airs for the rest of their lives.

JOHNNY
Wait a minute! Carl's doing his Federal and he isn't inferior. He's the smartest kid at school!

FATHER
Sorry. Carl's a fine boy...

Johnny puts on his jacket.

JOHNNY
I don't know what they teach at Harvard, but I think I'm pretty good just the way I am!

MOTHER
Johnny, please. Calm yourself.

JOHNNY
Well, that's what you're saying! You're saying that I'm not good enough the way I am now!

Johnny stomps out, the transporter goes ZAPPP!

MOTHER
Why did you go and do that? He was all ready to go to Zegema Beach!

FATHER
Teenagers!

INT UNI HIGH GYMNASIUM -- NIGHT -- EVERYONE

at the "FAREWELL DANCE" is dressed up. Rasczak and other TEACHERS chaperon. A spotlight finds the BAND LEADER.

BAND LEADER
Alright, everybody, this is the last dance, so let's turn down the lights and make it a slow one.

The lights go down. Dizzy, dressed pretty, brightens when she sees Johnny standing alone near the dance floor.

DIZZY
Hey, Rico, wanna dance?

JOHNNY
Actually, Diz, I promised Carmen...

DIZZY
Too bad for her if she's not around.

Dizzy pulls him onto the floor, holds him close.

DIZZY
You know, it's sad... Most of us probably won't see each other again after tonight.

There is an invitation here. Johnny doesn't take it.

JOHNNY
You still gonna play for Brazil?

DIZZY
Looks like, unless Tokyo lets me start.

JOHNNY
Well, anyone who gets you is lucky.

DIZZY
How come we never got together?

Dizzy looks at Johnny meaningfully. He's distracted. Carmen crosses the room, stunning in her formal.

JOHNNY
Can't we just be friends, Diz?

DIZZY
Sure.

JOHNNY
Uh, look, Diz...

DIZZY
Guess you gotta go.

JOHNNY
You're the best.

Johnny heads for Carmen. Dizzy watches jealously as Carmen takes his hand. She looks around for someone to dance with. Carl, a nerd in a tux, waves shyly.

INT GYMNASIUM -- DANCE FLOOR -- NIGHT -- CARMEN AND JOHNNY

dance. Johnny wants to kiss her, Carmen playfully avoids.

JOHNNY
Isn't it great to be in love?

CARMEN
How do I know if this is love?

JOHNNY
It wouldn't be so romantic if we weren't...

CARL
Outa the way you two!

Carl and Dizzy dance by, Dizzy smiling bravely because Carl is a terrible dancer. Johnny goes in for the kiss again.

CARMEN
Romance is just a vestigial biological response procreation...

JOHNNY
Aw, you're in love with me... You just don't know it yet.

Johnny's confidence makes her smile. Johnny moves in to kiss her, but the music ends. Everyone applauds. The lights come up and people head for the doors. Johnny sees Rasczak.

JOHNNY
Wait, I want to talk to Mr. Rasczak.

CARMEN
I'll meet you outside.

Johnny heads over to Rasczak.

JOHNNY
Mister Rasczak?

RASCZAK
What is it, Rico?

JOHNNY
I just wanted to say thanks 'cause History and Moral Philosophy was the best class I had this year.

RASCZAK
(smiling)
Well, it's not really my job to please. Hope you learned something.

JOHNNY
I wanna join up, Mr. Rasczak. I think I have what it takes to be a citizen.

RASCZAK
Good for you. Go find out.

JOHNNY
Well, my parents are against it, and I know it's my choice, but I was wondering... What would you do if you were me?

RASCZAK
Figuring things out for yourself is the only freedom anyone really has. Use that freedom. Make your own choice, Rico.

EXT UNI HIGH GYMNASIUM -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY

walks out and finds Carmen talking with Zander. He wears the blue uniform of a Fleet pilot trainee. Carmen examines his FLEET PIN, a pair of silver wings.

CARMEN
Johnny, this is Zander.

ZANDER
Yeah, we know each other from the game. No hard feeling, eh, chum?

JOHNNY
None at all... We won.

CARMEN
Good luck at the academy.

Zander takes back the wings and pins them to his tunic.

ZANDER
Always.

EXT PROMENADE -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY AND CARMEN

walk together along the river holding hands.

CARMEN
He just got accepted to the Fleet Academy. Isn't it great?

JOHNNY
Yeah, sure, I guess.

CARMEN
No, I mean if he can get in, maybe I have a chance.

JOHNNY
What are you talking about? We both know you're gonna be a pilot.

CARMEN
Zander's going for pilot, too.

JOHNNY
You two have so much in common.

Carmen pulls Johnny to a stop, looks him in the eye.

CARMEN
Johnny Rico, you're jealous!

JOHNNY
I can't help it.

CARMEN
He's nothing like you.

JOHNNY
I don't even know if you're my girl.

Carmen smiles, leans in close to Johnny.

CARMEN
Are you the boy for me?

JOHNNY
I'm gonna do it, Carmen. I'm gonna sign up for Federal Service.

They kiss, tentatively, but the passion grows and they break apart, breathless.

CARMEN
Oh, Johnny...!

EXT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY AND CARMEN

making out as they wait their turn. There are a few other people around including a POLICEMAN.

CARMEN
Everyone's looking... we shouldn't...

JOHNNY
Who cares?

CARMEN
You're right. Let's never stop...

POLICEMAN
Hey, you, there's a place for that!

Without stopping, Johnny pulls Carmen into the flux. ZAPPP!

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INT FEDERAL HOUSING -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY AND CARMEN

kissing at her front door. Johnny moves his hand tenatively to Carmen's breast. She takes his hand, smiling, puts it under her shirt.

JOHNNY
I love you, Carmen.

CARMEN
Shhh...

She puts his mouth on his and they melt together. The door flies open, and CARMEN'S DAD stands there.

CARMEN'S DAD
Carmen, it's late. Get inside.

CARMEN
Sorry, Dad. See you, Johnny.

Carmen ducks inside. Her father looks Johnny over. He carries a terrible battle scar on his face.

CARMEN'S DAD
I don't want you around Carmen anymore. Get me?

JOHNNY
Maybe Carmen's gonna make her own decisions from now on, Mr. Ibanez.

Carmen's Dad reddens. He'd like to punch Johnny out.

CARMEN'S DAD
Carmen's gonna be a citizen. She don't need you and your rich family. The Federation'll give her everything she needs.

CARMEN (O.S.)
Dad, leave him alone...!

Carmen's Dad slams the door in Johnny's face.

EXT FEDERAL BUILDING -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND CARMEN

meet Carl in front of the induction center where a steady flow of prospective citizens file through the main doors.

INT LOBBY -- DAY -- THE RECRUITING SERGEANT

is missing an arm. He smiles broadly at the three teenagers.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Fresh meat for the grinder, eh?

CARL
That's us. Where do we sign?

He turns in his chair to grab the forms. Johnny and his friends see that he is also missing both legs. The Recruiting Sergeant catches them looking, smiles ever wider.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Here and here and here.

As he signs, Johnny looks at the campaign ribbons on the Recruiting Sergeant's chest. We hear MUSIC: "The Mobile Infantry Anthem" plays softly in honor of distant battles.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Welcome to the adventure of Federal Service. Follow the blue line.

INT PROCESSING HALL -- DAY -- JOHNNY, CARMEN AND CARL

are routed into different lines, joining other hopeful civilians. A COLONEL makes a speech over the loudspeaker.

COLONEL
There is no guarantee of service. We don't need all of you. It costs a great deal to train human beings for useful tasks. Many jobs are hazardous to your health. If you are chosen and do not wish to serve you may resign at anytime simply by completing form 1240/A. Thank you for exercising your constitutional rights.

INT CHANGING ROOM -- DAY -- JOHNNY

and others in the line strip down. The guy in front of Johnny is DON, 18, athletic and cheerful.

DON
They took my sister, they'll take anybody.

INT TESTING FACILITY -- DAY -- JOHNNY

grimaces as a TECHNICIAN installs an INTERFACE PLATE on his side, drawing fluids.

DON
Oh, this is the part that hurts!

A PSYCH OFFICER sits down across from each candidate.

PSYCH OFFICER
No talking please. I'm going to ask you some questions. Please answer all questions truthfully. We'll know if you don't. Birthplace?

JOHNNY
Here in Buenos Aires.

The Psych Officer checks Johnny's response on a meter.

INT VARIOUS TESTING STATIONS -- DAY -- JOHNNY

is poked and prodded, subjected to aural, visual and pharmacological stimuli, and scanned from head to toe.

PSYCH OFFICER (V.O.)
Are your parents currently citizens?

JOHNNY (V.O.)
No, sir.

PSYCH OFFICER (V.O.)
Which do you think is more important, courage or confidence?

JOHNNY (V.O.)
Courage, I guess.

PSYCH OFFICER (V.O.)
Please complete this sentence. I want to be a citizen because...

JOHNNY (V.O.)
I want to be a citizen because... well, because of my girl, sir.

INT DEBRIEF -- DAY -- JOHNNY

sits across from a MAJOR who views a list on a monitor Johnny can't see.

MAJOR
I'm happy to tell you that you've been accepted for Federal Service.

JOHNNY
Wow, that's great.

MAJOR
Looks like you're quite an athlete. Boy, look at those reaction stats.

The Major clucks his tongue as he highlights the last category on his list: MOBILE INFANTRY.

MAJOR
My job is to determine what you're best suited for.

JOHNNY
I want to be a pilot, sir.

MAJOR
Sorry, son, no way. Your school records say you don't have the math skills.

Johnny swallows this. He knew it was coming. The Major deletes "PILOT" from the list, then several other items.

MAJOR
That rules out the scientific and engineering applications, and I'm afraid we reserve non-military options for candidates who are frankly less able-bodied than you are, son...

He turns the monitor around and shows Johnny the list. The only thing left is MOBILE INFANTRY.

MAJOR
It looks like the only thing you're good for is cannon fodder. I'm putting you down for the Mobile Infantry!

INT AUDITORIUM -- DAY -- CARMEN

proudly takes the Federal Service oath with about twenty-five other people, a gleaming silver FLEET PIN on her chest. She looks around for Johnny, sees him grinning at her.

JOHNNY ET AL
...of my own free will, without promise, coercion, or inducement, after having been duly advised and warned of the meaning and consequences of this oath, do now enroll in the Federal Service of the Terran Federation for not less than two years and as much longer as may be required by the needs of the Service...

INT FEDERAL BUILDING -- LOBBY -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND CARMEN

walk out together happily, hand in hand.

CARMEN
I wonder where Carl is? You don't suppose...?

JOHNNY
Naw, I made it, Carl made it.

Just then, Don rushes past, shamefaced, crying.

JOHNNY
He was in the group with me. I guess he didn't...

CARMEN
Shhh! Don't make him feel worse.

The Recruiting Sergeant is getting ready to go home. He's got legs now, and he takes a prosthetic arm from its case and snaps it on. He grins when he sees them staring.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
They put me out front to discourage the weak-hearted, but at the end of the day I go home. How'd you kids do?

CARMEN
I'm gonna go for pilot.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Good for you. We need every pilot we can get.

Johnny holds the door for Carmen and the Recruiting Sergeant. Suddenly Carl appears looking a little paler than usual.

CARMEN
Hey, Carl, what's wrong?

JOHNNY
Did you get Starside R&D?

CARL
No.

EXT FEDERAL BUILDING -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND CARMEN

are stunned.

JOHNNY
I don't believe it!

CARL
I got Games & Theory.

Well, everyone's a little impressed by this.

CARMEN
Games & Theory? That's Military Intelligence... Oh, Carl!

JOHNNY
Whoa! Way to go, boy-yo!

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Next time we meet, I'll probably have to salute you. What about you, son?

JOHNNY
Infantry, sir.

The Recruiting Sergeant beams, offers a prosthetic hand.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Well, good for you. The Mobile Infantry made me the man I am today.

Just what Johnny wanted to hear. They watch the old Sergeant walk away. MUSIC: "The Mobile Infantry Theme". Carmen takes Johnny and Carl by the arm as they walk.

CARMEN
Let's all make a vow. Let's swear we'll always be friends no matter what.

JOHNNY
I'll go for that.

CARL
Well, we're all gonna be millions of light years away from each other, and chances are we'll never see each other again, but sure...

CARMEN
I can't wait to tell my Dad I'm in. He's gonna be so happy!

JOHNNY
My father's probably gonna kill me.

INT JOHNNY'S HOUSE -- STUDY -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY stands sullenly as his Father rages at him.

FATHER
You'll resign, and that's all there is to it! It might look bad, but if that's the worst you suffer...

JOHNNY
I won't quit!

FATHER
I'm telling you, you will! You're not going back. You're going to go on vacation!

JOHNNY
I'm not going on vacation! I want to be a citizen! It's my decision. I made it.

Johnny turns for the door. His father throws his last shot.

FATHER
You walk out that door, you're cut off, young man... You understand me? Alright, THAT'S IT, YOU'RE...

INT JOHNNY'S HOUSE -- HALLWAY -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY walks out, grim, sees his mother, tears in her eyes.

FATHER (O.S.)
...CUT OFF!

MOTHER
Johnny, why won't you change your mind? Does citizenship mean so much to you?

JOHNNY
Well, yeah, sure...

MOTHER
I hope so. I hope you don't ruin your life over some silly little girl who wants to look handsome in a uniform.

Johnny's face reddens.

JOHNNY
Don't talk about my girl that way.

Johnny turns on his heel, heads for the transporter. ZAPPP!

EXT FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION HUB -- DAY -- JOHNNY

looks for Carmen among hundreds of young people bound for Federal Service destinations. Recruits wear civilian clothes. Everyone else is in uniform.

P.A. (O.S.)
Outbound group 1380, Ursa Minor and Tyko, now transporting at bank 17...

Now he sees her entering struggling with luggage. Johnny rushes to help her and soon he is carrying all her bags.

JOHNNY
You're late.

CARMEN
My Dad had to help me pack. Suddenly he's afraid he's never gonna see me again or something. It was sweet, but it took forever. Anyway, I guess I'm ready to go.

At the freight station, Carmen enters her Federal I.D. card and gets numbered tags for her bags.

JOHNNY
Me, too. I'm wearing everything I own.

Johnny loads them onto a conveyer belt.

CARMEN
Poor boy. I'm sorry your parents were so mad.

JOHNNY
Who cares! The Federation'll give me everything I need for the next two years, right?

Carmen's already moved to the next line. Johnny follows.

CARMEN
You talk to Carl?

JOHNNY
He left this morning. He couldn't say where.

Carmen logs in, enters her destination: LUNA -- TERESHKOVA FLEET ACADEMY. The ticket station spits out a pass.

CARMEN
It's exciting, but it's scary, too isn't it? Going someplace new where you don't know anyone.

Carmen heads toward a bank of transporters. Johnny stops her, takes her by the arms.

JOHNNY
I'm gonna miss you.

CARMEN
I'll miss you, too, Johnny.

JOHNNY
I love you.

P.A. (O.S.)
Outbound group 948A, Tereshkova, all sections, transportating at bank 5.

CARMEN
Oh, that's me!

She scans her pass, but Johnny stops her again.

JOHNNY
Com'on, just say it. Try it on for size.

CARMEN
Alright. I love you.

Carmen kisses him, jumps into the transporter.

JOHNNY
Do you mean it?

CARMEN
I said it. Isn't that enough? Don't forget to write!

ZAPPP! The last thing he sees are her beautiful eyes.

FROM THE FEDERAL NET -- A WORLD THAT WORKS!

People doing Federal Service jobs all over the known Galaxy.

OFFICIAL VOICE
From all over the known Galaxy, prospective citizens work together to make a better tomorrow! Would you like to know more?

CRIME & PUNISHMENT -- TONIGHT!

A CRIMINAL stands before a FEDERAL COURT.

OFFICIAL VOICE
A murderer was captured and tried today. Sentence: DEATH. Tonight at six, all Net, all channels. Would you like to know more?

NOTICE -- ARE YOU PSYCHIC?

A Federal clinic specializing in psychic research.

OFFICIAL VOICE
If you think you're psychic, maybe you are. Harness your unique abilities and take advantage of the many Federal benefits available for psychic citizens. Would you like to know more?

TRAVEL ADVISORY -- INSECT TRAGEDY ON TANGO URILLA

A prefab township sits on the shores of a tranquil alien bay. Then, a "You Are Here" map of the Known Universe.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Disregarding Federal warnings, Mormon extremists established Port Joe Smith, a settlement of 300 on Tango Urilla, a system just inside the Arachnid Quarantine Zone.

Archival pictures of a captive two meter ARACHNID WARRIOR, multiple eyes, cutting mouthparts and claws. Wary SCIENTISTS keep their distance as it eats a COW.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Too late they realized that Tango Urilla had already been chosen by other colonists -- Arachnids!

Now body parts litter the ruined streets of Port Joe Smith.

OFFICIAL VOICE
The council asks future colonists to obey all official Federal warnings. Would you like to know more?

EXT CAMP CURRIE -- PARADE GROUND -- DAY -- SERGEANT ZIM

is 40, astoundingly fit, and like all drill instructors, he carries a small baton. He addresses sixty shorn RECRUITS.

ZIM
The problem with you is that none of you are good enough the way you are.

Johnny stands in formation with his squad, among them: BRECKINRIDGE, 18, DJANA'D, 19, KATRINA McINTIRE, 18, ACE LEVY, 18, SHUJUMI, 18, and KITTEN SMITH, 18.

ZIM
I am your senior drill instructor, Career Sergeant Zim.
(then)
TO THINK THIS HAD TO HAPPEN TO ME! What a bunch of apes. No, strike that. You don't rate that good... you sunken-chested, slack-bellied, drooling refugees from apron strings! In my whole life I've never seen such a disgraceful huddle of momma's spoiled little darlings! Suck in those guts! You there, EYES FRONT!

Zim gives Kitten Smith the hairy eyeball. Smith cracks up.

ZIM
Do you think I'm funny? Do I make you laugh? Do you think I'm a comedian?

Kitten Smith shakes his head "no", but can't stifle himself.

KITTEN SMITH
Sorry...!

ZIM
The first and last words out of your stinking holes will be "sir". Do you get me?

KITTEN SMITH
Sir, sorry...sir

ZIM
See the armory? Run round it!

Kitten Smith squints. Out in the distance, a tiny building. Zim smacks him on the leg with his baton.

KITTEN SMITH
YEOW!

ZIM
RUN, I SAID. Bronski, keep pace!

Kitten Smith runs. Big CORPORAL BRONSKI, 28, takes out after him, laying a baton across his backside every time he slows.

ZIM
You are now all brothers and sisters in the same family, my family, the Mobile Infantry. I will be your mother. I will be your father. If you do not please me, I will throw you out of my family because I hate all slackers and negative hackers. Do you get me?

JOHNNY ET AL
Sir, yes, sir!

Zim points at the little WHITE PICKET FENCE leading to a transporter near the front gate.

ZIM
Anytime you think I'm being too tough, anytime you think I'm being unfair... QUIT! Grab your gear and take a stroll down "Washout Lane". Get me?

JOHNNY ET AL
Sir, yes, sir!

ZIM
I wonder if there's a handful of guts in the whole bunch. Who thinks they've got what it takes to knock me down?

Breckinridge, a big guy from the farm planet, steps forward.

BRECKINRIDGE
Sir, I guess maybe I do, sir.

Zim crooks a finger at him. Breckinridge charges. Zim knocks him flat. Breckinridge holds his arm, twisted now.

ZIM
You alright, Breckinridge?

BRECKINRIDGE
Sir, yes, sir. It's my arm. I think it's broken, sir.

ZIM
MEDIC!

A MEDIC charges up, checks Breckinridge's arm, grins.

MEDIC
Clean break... Doc'll have him back on active duty by tomorrow.

ZIM
Good. Who's next?

Shujumi steps up, assumes a fighting stance. Zim looks him over. There's not much to him. Shujumi attacks Zim, counters his counter, dances out of range.

DJANA'D
Lookit the little guy go!

Now Zim attacks. Shujumi flip kicks Zim in the head.

JOHNNY
He's good alright.

KATRINA
I'll bet he makes squad leader.

ACE
He'll have to get past me.

The recruits check Ace out. Zim sweeps Shujumi's legs, puts a knee in the little man's throat. Shujumi passes out.

ZIM
MEDIC!

EXT OBSTACLE COURSE -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS

tumble a brutal obstacle course using JUMP BOOTS.

ZIM (V.O.)
Some of you may not make it.

Djana'd hits a tower and falls to the deck hard, dropping her rifle. She holds her knee, hurt. Zim races over to her.

ZIM
WHY IS THAT WEAPON ON THE GROUND?
YOUR WEAPON IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOU
ARE! PICK IT UP! PICK IT UP!

Zim begins to kick her because she doesn't move fast enough.

ZIM (V.O.)
You might think I am unfair.

EXT ZERO GRAVITY COMBAT -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS

watch poor Kitten Smith spar with Zim. Kitten Smith whacks Zim across the jaw. Zim doesn't even flinch.

ZIM
Is that all you got? You hit like a
kitten, Smith! This is a punch.

WHAM! Zim knocks Kitten Smith for a loop.

ZIM (V.O.)
You will not like me.

INT HYPERPHYSICAL TRAINING ENVIRONMENTS -- DAY -- ZIM

watches the recruits face simulated 3-D OFF-WORLD FOES. In one room, CYCLOPS SOLDIERS of Antilles, in another, red DEATH WALKERS, and in a third, screeching ARACHNID WARRIORS.

ZIM (V.O.)
But if you survive you will thank me
because you will be born again hard.
You will be a new person. You will be
a Cap Trooper. And then, MAYBE,
you'll be good enough...

56 OMIT SCENE 56

EXT COMBAT KNIFE PRACTICE -- DAY -- ZIM

throws a knife, buries the point in a narrow post.

ZIM (V.O.)
...to serve in my family.

ACE
Sir, I don't understand who needs a knife in a nuke fight anyway... All you gotta do is push a button, sir!

Zim yanks the knife out of the post.

ZIM
Put your hand on the post, private.

Ace obeys. Zim throws, sticks his hand to the post.

ACE
AWK!

ZIM
The enemy cannot push a button if you disable his hand. MEDIC!

Zim pays no attention to Ace who remains stuck to the post. A recruit trots up. Johnny stares, surprised. It's Dizzy.

DIZZY
Sir, recruit Flores, reporting for duty, sir.

She snaps Zim a salute and hands him her orders.

ZIM
I see you specifically requested transfer from Fort Cronkite to this training group...

Dizzy grins self-consciously at Johnny.

DIZZY
Sir, I heard it was the best, sir!

ZIM
It is the best... BUT WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU'RE GOOD ENOUGH? ON YOUR BELLY AND GIVE ME FIFTY, RECRUIT!

Dizzy hits the deck and starts doing push-ups, counting off as MEDICS arrive and go to work on Ace's hand.

INT MESS HALL -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS

line up for mess piled four-square together on a single plate, meat on the bottom, ice cream on top.

ACE
I'd like to disable Zim...!

KATRINA
Improper Attitude! They'll kick you out for talking like that...

DJANA'D
They can kick you out for anything. Improper Conduct, Unsatisfactory Performance...

KITTEN SMITH
Off you go down Washout Lane, bye-bye!

Ace cuts into the front of the mess line.

ACE
Aw, you either got what it takes or you don't.

DJANA'D
C'mon Ace, wait your turn!

ACE
At ease, soldier. It's all the same muck.

JOHNNY
Better get in line like everyone else, Ace.

Silence. There could be a fight. Zim, standing nearby, watches with interest. Ace opens his hand.

ACE
You got some guts for a rich kid. I guess you and me could be buddies.

JOHNNY
What an honor...

ACE
Hey, don't laugh. Everyone oughta have a friend like me!

Ace makes a big friendly show of trading places with Johnny.

BRECKINRIDGE
Come on, Ace, back of the line! Back of the line!

Now everyone's laughing, pushing Ace to the back of the line. Johnny has his grub. Dizzy comes up with her tray.

DIZZY
Hey, amigo, come chow with me.

JOHNNY
No thanks, Diz.

DIZZY
What's your malfunction, Rico?

JOHNNY
You are. I joined up to get out on my own, and you had to tag along.

DIZZY
What? You think I joined the Mobile Infantry because of you?

JOHNNY
You saying you didn't?

Johnny turns away. Dizzy watches him go, hurt.

58A EXT OBSTACLE COURSE -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS 58A

tumble the difficult course in their power suits. At the head of the pack, breathing hard, Johnny and Ace race.

ACE
What makes you think... you'll make... squad leader, Rico?

JOHNNY
Something... I've got... you don't.

ACE
You rich kids... are all the same!

JOHNNY
It isn't about rich... It's about who's best...!

They come to a trap, prepare to leap.

DIZZY
Coming through!

Dizzy jumps over them from behind. Johnny and Ace tumble into the mud. They watch, chagrined, as Dizzy reaches the end of the course effortlessly.

ZIM
C'mon, move it, you apes!

59 OMIT SCENE 59

INT SHOWERS -- NIGHT -- DIZZY

enters as the recruits scrub down.

KITTEN SMITH
We all have one thing in common. We were all stupid enough to sign up for Mobile Infantry. What's your excuse, Breckinridge?

BRECKINRIDGE
Well, my family's all farmers. I hate farming. Mobile Infantry's pure picnic by comparison.

KITTEN SMITH
So they grow'em big and dumb on the farm planet, eh? Djana'd?

DJANA'D
I'm going in for politics. You gotta be a citizen for that. So here I am.

KITTEN SMITH
C'mon, keep it going... Katrina!

KATRINA
I wanna be a mom. It's easier to get a license if you've served.

ACE
I'm going career... officer's training. That's why I wanna be squad leader. They look for that.

JOHNNY
Wanting it doesn't make you the best one for the job.

ACE
Oh, yeah? I don't see anyone else here with the chops to lead.

JOHNNY
Well, maybe you better look again.

SHUJUMI
Federation's gonna give me a scholarship when my hitch is up. I wanna be a neurologist, study brain chemisty and associated stimulus...

Dizzy dresses down. Johnny and all the other guys check her out. She has a fabulous body. Dizzy catches Johnny looking. He turns his back as she steps into the shower next to him.

KITTEN SMITH
Your turn, Rico!

JOHNNY
Aw, who asked you to be so nosey?

KITTEN SMITH
Me, I got plans to be a writer, and a writer's got a right to be nosey. Flores, you know Rico from Buenos Aries... What's his story?

Dizzy uses her hand to divert the shower spray toward Johnny's crotch.

DIZZY
Well, some say he turned his back on the family fortune to be a citizen, others say he did it for a girl... missed a spot there, bucko... which is funny because Johnny says I joined up to be with him, but why would I do that? He doesn't even like me.

BRECKINRIDGE
Don't look that way to me.

Everyone looks down at Johnny's crotch, laughing. Johnny blushes, grabs a towel and exits the shower.

INT BARRACKS -- NIGHT -- INTO CAMERA -- JOHNNY

pans the barracks with a little handcam, neat bunks in a row, other recruits lounging around in their skivvies.

JOHNNY
I know it's not much, but it's home. Over there's my bunk where I dream about you every night...

Ace, Kitten Smith, Shujumi and Breckinridge dance around and moon the camera.

JOHNNY
Hey, do you mind?

Johnny moves the camera away from the guys. Katrina walks by from the shower with Dizzy, mugs into frame.

KATRINA
Hey, what's going on?

DIZZY
I bet it's that girl I was talking about... Her name's Carmen, I think.

ACE AND THE OTHERS
Carmen! Ooh la la, Carmencita!

KATRINA
Hi, Carmen!

Johnny heads for the door.

ACE AND THE OTHERS
Hey, where you goin? Come back...!
He's getting away... Grab him...!

The picture goes all screwy, comes up again on:

EXT BARRACKS -- NIGHT -- INTO CAMERA -- JOHNNY

talks quietly now outside the barracks door.

JOHNNY
Boot's pretty tough, and sometimes I think I won't make it, but then I imagine you're watching me, and that gives me something... I try harder. Thanks to you, I think I might have a shot at squad leader.

The barracks lights go out. Taps plays over the public address. Johnny lowers his voice.

JOHNNY
Uh-oh, I gotta pack it in. I hope you're having fun, hope you're careful. No training accidents for you, eh?
(leaning into camera)
I want to kiss you so badly. I want to feel you next to me, I --

Behind him, someone begins to sing, badly.

ACE
I love you truly, so truly, dear...!

Ace, the singer, and the other guys peer down from the transom over the door, giggling, delighted with themselves.

PULLBACK TO REVEAL:

INT TERESHKOVA FLEET ACADEMY -- DAY -- CARMEN

watches the end of Johnny's letter. Ace continues to sing.

ACE
Our love will grow, dear, year by year...

JOHNNY
Bye! Write me! I'm gonna kill you guys!

The letter ends. Carmen smiles. A BALD CADET PILOT smacks her on the arm as she runs by in a sleek blue pressure suit.

BALD CADET
Orbit in five, Ibanez! First one there gets to fly!

Grinning, Carmen grabs her duffel, takes off after her.

INT BOARDING CORRIDOR -- DAY -- CARMEN

and the bald cadet race for the hatch past other recruits.

INT BOAT -- DAY CYCLE -- CARMEN

gets there first, jumps into the pilot seat. The Bald Pilot takes second seat.

CARMEN
Locking it down!

Two LATE CADETS duck in through the closing hatch door.

LATE CADET
Oh no, not Ibanez again. She's crazy!

CARMEN
On my mark, in three, two, one...

66 OMIT SCENE 66

67 OMIT SCENE 67

EXT LUNAR ORBIT -- THE BOAT

streaks upward from the lunar floor past orbitting training platforms where CADETS in brightly colored pressure suits float against the Earth which hangs beyond the horizon.

CARMEN (O.S.)
...GO!

INT BOAT -- LUNAR ORBIT -- CARMEN

blasts past a DESTROYER orbiting in dock, zips between CORVETTES and other slower fleet traffic in the crowded space lanes of Luna. The two late cadets are terrified.

BALD CADET
Geez, I thought I liked to fly fast!

CARMEN
This is nothing. Today, I get to fly that!

She points. Now visible from behind a host of smaller ships STARSHIP **ATHENA**, of older design, but impressive.

70 OMIT SCENE 70

71 OMIT SCENE 71

INT ATHENA -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- DAY CYCLE -- CARMEN

arrives on the bridge, dark, cramped, all-business. She salutes the instructor, CAPTAIN DELADIER, 40s.

CARMEN
Pilot Trainee Ibanez reporting for duty, ma'am.

DELADIER
Take the number one chair, Ibanez. Follow all instructions of your supervisor.

CARMEN
Yes, ma'am!

Carmen turns for her station, but stops in her tracks. Her supervisor is Zander Barcalow, now a 2nd Lieutenant.

CARMEN
Hey! What're you doing here?

ZANDER
I'm the guy who's gonna teach you to fly this crate.

Carmen logs on. The ship recognizes her as a pilot trainee.

CARMEN
Assistant Instructor... You must be some kind of hot stick. Should I call you "sir"?

ZANDER
Only when I give you an order.

DELADIER
Prepare for departure.

Carmen and Zander go to work.

CARMEN
It's amazing, us running into each other like this. Maybe it's fate.

ZANDER
Maybe not. I heard about this crazy girl coming through the academy, solid math, a little wild on the stick, but a natural. When it turned out it was you, I made sure we'd run into each other...

DELADIER
Alright, take'er out, Ibanez.

CARMEN
Yes, ma'am.

All eyes are on Carmen as she grabs the stick. The ship shudders under her hand. She winks at Zander.

CARMEN
In simulation, my supervisors could never keep up.

ZANDER
This isn't simulation anymore. Take'er out easy, cadet.

CARMEN
Oh, yes, sir. Vector?

ZANDER
Twenty-five by five, roll seven. And don't exceed port speed.

Carmen rocks the stick, and the view from the bridge spins smoothly away from the dense orbiting yards of Luna toward the outer system.

CARMEN
Or...?

ZANDER
They revoke <u>our</u> flight status.

CARMEN
Oh, I see... teamwork.

Carmen jogs past lumbering freighters. Zander's impressed.

DELADIER
Steady as she goes, number one. Prepare for warp. Number two, design for Jupiter orbit.

ZANDER
Yes, ma'am. Star drive in three... two... one.

Space appears to bend. Zander and Carmen share a smile. They blur together, becoming one, then: WHAM!

EXT LUNA -- STARSHIP ATHENA

disappears in a flash of blinding light.

74 OMIT SCENE 74

75 OMIT SCENE 75

76 OMIT SCENE 76

EXT WAR GAMES COURSE -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS

have been divided into two teams. RED TEAM includes Ace, Katrina, Breckinridge, and Djana'd. Johnny, Shujumi, Kitten Smith and Dizzy are part of BLUE TEAM.

ZIM
The object of this exercise is to capture your enemy's flag before your enemy captures yours.

Bronski passes out Morita SmartRifles.

ZIM
These weapons have been modified for this exercise. If your enemy hits you, your suit will fail. You will be unable to move. You will be as good as dead.

EXT WAR GAMES COURSE -- LATER -- DAY -- DJANA'D

bumps the magnification on her heads up display to survey Blue Team's flag guarded by two recruits. She jumps down to joining other Red Team members on the move.

DJANA'D
It's right over the next ridge... Only two guards.

Johnny, Kitten Smith and Dizzy open fire from a thicket as they pass. Djana'd and the others collapse as their suits fail, Djana'd laughing because playing at war seems funny.

KITTEN SMITH
You are now prisoners of the Blue Team. Tell us your plans or die!

DJANA'D
Oh no! Name, rank, and mind your own business is all you get from me!

EXT RED TEAM FLAG -- DAY -- RED TEAM

opens fire as Blue Team appears. Shujumi and other Blue Team members go down in an ambushed led by Breckinridge. Johnny dives for cover, and finds himself sharing it with Dizzy.

KITTEN SMITH
I'm going in! Let's go!

Kitten Smith makes a run for the flag with a rifle team. Ace and Katrina open fire from two new hidden Red Team positions, taking Kitten and his team down with a cross fire.

JOHNNY
Man, they're defended... no way in.

DIZZY
Flip six, three hole.

JOHNNY
What?

DIZZY
High school... remember? Run a flip six, three hole play, and you might score...

Johnny looks at the course in a new way, nods.

JOHNNY
Cover me.

DIZZY
You got it.

Johnny tumbles open ground, vaults into the air. Dizzy takes out Breckinridge as he rises to fire. Johnny lands, knocks out Katrina, then Ace. He picks up Ace's fallen Morita.

JOHNNY
Thanks, pal.

EXT OBSERVATION TOWER -- DAY -- ZIM AND CORPORAL BRONSKI

watch Johnny firing both Moritas simultaneously and taking out the remaining Red Team defenders. He grabs the Red Team flag and hurls it into the air like a spear.

ZIM
Kid's got some moves...

INT AIRBORNE SKIMMER -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS

line up in the door of a SKIMMER, the military's standard utility aircraft, to practice drops from altitude.

ZIM
Smith, GO! McIntire, GO! Flores, GO! Rico, I'm making you squad leader!

JOHNNY
Sir, thank you, sir!

ZIM
Don't stand there dumb... GO!

Johnny jumps, plummeting toward the earth.

JOHNNY
YEEEEE-HAaaaaaaaaaaaaaa...!

Next in line, Ace scowls.

INT BARRACKS -- NIGHT -- THE RECRUITS

have some free time. Johnny makes a big show of polishing the chevrons that designate him as Squad Leader.

KITTEN SMITH
Look at him. Do you think anyone has ever been so pleased with himself?

ACE
Zim hadda choose someone to be his brown nose, I guess.

JOHNNY
I just want you guys to know that I'll never do anything that I haven't asked you to do first.

Johnny approaches Dizzy.

JOHNNY
Couldn't've done it without you, Diz. Friends?

Dizzy smiles, shakes.

DIZZY
Yeah, sure... friends.

Bronski walks through with the mail.

BRONSKI
Levy... Shujumi... Rico.

Johnny grabs the E-disk, pops it into his handcam. The Fleet Mail logo appears: APPROVED MESSAGE.

JOHNNY
Bet it's from my girl.

Johnny's pals gather for a look. Carmen appears, dressed down to skivvies, in her quarters aboard starship Athena.

CARMEN
Hi, Johnny, I would've written sooner, but they've really got us going every moment here.

ACE
Yeow, Rico, you don't deserve that!

JOHNNY
Shhhh...!

CARMEN
I'm glad you're doing so well. If they haven't made squad leader by now, I'm sure you will.

Johnny holds up his squad leader chevrons victoriously.

JOHNNY
All it takes is the love of a good woman...

The image changes abruptly. Now Carmen's wearing a trim blue flight suit. She stands the camera on Athena's gunnery deck. Outside, the rings of Saturn sparkle in bright solar light.

CARMEN
Look at that. Isn't it beautiful? I had to show you. It's great to be out here on my own. I'm just not some little girl from Buenos Aires anymore. I'm gonna be a starship pilot, and I'm gonna see the Universe...
(she sighs)
And that's also the problem because I don't really want to get married, Johnny. I don't want to have kids. I want a command, a ship of my own, and, you know, I don't think that's gonna leave a lot of room for you and me.

Johnny is stunned. All the other recruits suddenly seem to have something else to do.

CARMEN
I know that's not what you wanted to hear... but I have to follow my heart. I'm sorry. I'm afraid you'll hate me, and I couldn't stand that. Write me, alright? Write me so I'll know that we'll always be friends.

The Fleet Mail logo appears again: END OF MESSAGE. Johnny shuts the handcam off. Ace puts a hand on his shoulder.

ACE
Funny how they always want to be friends after they kick your guts out.

JOHNNY
It's what I deserve.

ACE
Whad'ya talkin about?

JOHNNY
I joined up for her. I wouldn't even be here if it wasn't for her. I'm a fool.

ACE
You made squad leader on your own, and, hey, you still got me to kick around.

Johnny smiles in spite of himself.

JOHNNY
Thanks, Ace.

Johnny turns for the door, flipping the chevrons like a coin. Dizzy watches him leave. She'd so like to comfort him.

EXT LIVE FIRE COMBAT RANGE -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS

arm their Marauder power suits. Zim and Bronski wear Command model suits with rank designations. Johnny checks weapons, scans the electronics on each squad member's power suit.

ZIM
With the Marauder's visual capabilities, all you have to do is look at something to hit it, so you will exercise EXTREME CARE on my firing line. Do you get me?

RECRUITS
Sir, yes, sir!

ZIM
The live fire combat range is the closest simulation of actual combat we can provide. If you do not hit your target, it will shoot you...

Fifty blackened AUTOMATED TARGET DRONES fitted with pulse guns are presently visible along a gauntlet of low walls, gullies, and three-story building facades.

ZIM
The Marauder power suit will prevent serious injury, but if you are hit, you will be non-operational and your team score will suffer accordingly. Rico, has each member of your squad completed a weapons safety check?

JOHNNY
Sir, yes, sir!

On a signal from Zim, the Live Fire Combat Range comes to life as the target drones take cover and disappear from view.

ZIM
Perfect score for this exercise is 300. B company came through last week with 285. I expect you to do better.

EXT LIVE FIRE COMBAT RANGE -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS

take out the target drones as they appear. Halfway through the course, a recruit takes a hit and goes down, immobilized. Djana'd has a clear shot, but Breckinridge gets in her way.

DJANA'D
You're in my line of fire, Breckinridge!

Before the others can react, a second drone appears.

JOHNNY
CROSSFIRE! EVERYBODY DOWN!

Everyone kisses dirt. Pulses from the two drones fly thick overhead. Shujumi rises to fire, a round slams him back to the ground. Johnny and Djana'd knock out the two drones.

JOHNNY
Alright, no more more screw ups. Ace takes point. Diz, you and Kitten Smith cover the flanks. Djana'd, you're rear guard. Move out.

The squad resumes its advance. Breckinridge bangs on his helmet. There's something wrong with his "head up" display.

JOHNNY
What's the problem?

BRECKINRIDGE
Dunno. Display's fritzed.

DJANA'D
Lose another rifle, we're gonna mess up our score...

JOHNNY
Let me see.

Breckinridge takes off his helmet, hands it to Johnny. Djana'd turns on Breckinridge. Her "head up" zeroes him.

DJANA'D
How come when something goes wrong, it's always you, Breckinridge?

That's when Djana'd trips on a loose stone. She fumbles her rifle and it discharges. The round tears the top of Breckinridge's head off. The recruits stare in horror.

JOHNNY
Oh, God... uh... MEDIC!

Zim arrives with Bronski on the bounce.

ZIM
Rico, you are relieved of squad command. Levy, McIntire, you will escort private Rico to the C.O.'s Office.

The recruits watch Johnny leave, stare aghast at their dead comrade. No one looks at Djana'd, who stands alone sobbing.

INT C.O.'S OFFICE -- DAY -- JOHNNY

stands before the C.O. braced by Katrina and Ace. Zim and the C.O. are both saddened by the proceedings.

C.O.
Rico, did you give the recruit permission to remove his helmet?

JOHNNY
Sir, yes sir. Breckinridge reported a helmet malfunction, and I asked him to show it to me, sir.

C.O.
Are you rated to repair a Marauder power suit, Rico?

JOHNNY
Sir, no sir.

C.O.
Then why did you order your man to remove his helmet during a live fire exercise?

JOHNNY
Sir, I needed everyone in my squad operational, sir... I... I wanted to win, sir.

C.O.
(sigh)
You disobeyed safety regulation 21-404. You may, of course, demand trial by court martial.

JOHNNY
Sir, no, sir!

C.O.
Do you freely admit to the charges made against you?

JOHNNY
Sir... I guess I do, sir.

Zim looks out the window. Djana'd, dressed for travel in civilian clothes, crying as she heads off down Washout Lane.

C.O.
Sergeant, we've lost two recruits over this incident already... is there any possibility of salvaging this man?

ZIM
I believe so, sir.

C.O.
Alright. We'll try administrative punishment. Until then you are confined to quarters, Rico.

INT BARRACKS -- SUNSET -- JOHNNY

looks out the window to the parade ground where a POST has been erected. The recruits look up as Zim enters.

ZIM
Alright, let's go, Rico.

Johnny takes off his shirt. Ace, who now holds the chevrons of squad leader, watches, feels bad for his pal.

EXT PARADE GROUND -- SUNSET -- THE RECRUITS

stand with recruits from the other platoons. Johnny is led to the post and strung up as the C.O. reads the charge.

C.O.
For incompetence of command, for failure to abide by safety regulations in a live fire exercise, for negligence which contributed to the death of a teammate...

Zim steps up to Johnny, offers him a red rubber mouthpiece.

ZIM
Bite on this. It helps. I know.

C.O.
...recruit trainee John Rico is sentenced to administrative punishment. Ten lashes.

Johnny takes it in his mouth. His tear away shirt is torn away. Johnny stands at the post alone. Corporal Bronski, a big man with an unhappy task, unrolls his whip.

C.O.
You may carry out the sentence.

BRONSKI
One.

CRACK! Johnny's face wrenched by pain, spontaneous tears, a terrible sound stifled by the bright red mouthpiece.

BRONSKI
Two.

CRACK! Again. Dizzy flinches for Johnny.

BRONSKI
Three.

CRACK! Ace looks away.

BRONSKI
Four.

CRACK! Zim watches without apparent emotion.

BRONSKI
Five.

CRACK! Johnny faints, sagging against his tether.

FADE OUT

EXT OUTER SYSTEM -- STARSHIP ATHENA

cruises past, 600,000 metric tons of star class destroyer, FIGHTERS and LANDING BOATS lining her open hangar deck.

INT ATHENA -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- NIGHT CYCLE -- CARMEN

works alone on the empty bridge. She yawns. Zander brings coffee for himself and Carmen.

CARMEN
Thanks. You read my mind. Third watch always seems to last forever.

ZANDER
Oh, I don't know... Depends on who you're spending it with.

He caresses her hair. She kisses his hand. Zander notices the plot map.

ZANDER
Profile's wrong... there.

CARMEN
No, I replotted the course. It's more efficient this way.

ZANDER
Three weeks aboard a starship and you know it all, huh?

CARMEN
Hey, check it.

Zander slides into his chair, runs a check.

ZANDER
You know, I was talking to Captain, Deladier, and she said...

CARMEN
Don't change the subject. Am I right?

ZANDER
Well, whad'ya know...

CARMEN
Don't mess with the boss. So what'd the captain say?

ZANDER
She got a command... and she thinks we oughta team up officially and crew for her. She thinks we're good together.

CARMEN
You and me, huh?

Zander turns his chair so they are very close, moves a finger along her hand, up her arm and playfully around her breasts.

ZANDER
I have a feeling about us. We're good together, way ahead of the curve in every department. I seem to be able to anticipate your needs. You know what I want...

Carmen grabs him between his legs.

CARMEN
No, what do you want?

Zander pulls her to him and they kisse passionately. She breaks it off, gets serious for a moment.

CARMEN
I want to be part of the best flight team in the Fleet...

ZANDER
Me, too... Day and Night-Cycle.

They start to caress again when suddenly ALARMS sound. Captain Deladier appears on the hot screen, still waking up.

DELADIER
Report.

ZANDER
Captain, we are in the path of an unidentified object moving at near light speed...

Carmen and Zander frantically check their displays.

CARMEN
WHERE IS IT?

ZANDER
THERE! GRAVITY FIELD... IT'S BIG!

CARMEN
It looks like an... asteroid.

DELADIER
In this part of the system?

Carmen and Zander see it through the front screens: A huge ASTEROID tumbles directly toward them at terrific speed.

ZANDER
Sweet Jesus...!

Carmen breaks glass that reads **EMERGENCY RETROS**, arms the switch within and and fires the rockets.

EXT OUTER SYSTEM -- STARSHIP ATHENA

torques to one side. The asteroid grazes the ship, cutting a huge gash in Athena's hull. Ice and rock traveling in its wake shreds COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT.

INT COMMAND AND CONTROL -- NIGHT CYCLE -- CARMEN AND ZANDER

brace themselves as diamond hard particles pound the front screens. The ship continues to tumble.

EXT ATHENA -- FLIGHT DECK -- A FIGHTER

loses it's mooring, tumbling into other craft, explosions ripping the deck.

INT ATHENA -- VARIOUS -- NIGHT CYCLE -- CREWMAN

are sucked into space. Others hang on frantically as automatic doors seal Athena's wound and their fates.

INT COMMAND AND CONTROL -- NIGHT CYCLE -- CAPTAIN DELADIER

arrives on the bridge, now crowded as other FLIGHT OFFICERS rush to their stations. Zander's going through star charts.

DELADIER
Where'd it come from?

ZANDER
Trajectory indicates it came out of the Arachnid Quarantine Zone.

DELADIER
Number 4, contact Fleet and tell'em there's a loose asteroid headed their way.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
Communications are down, ma'am.

DELADIER
Engineering. Damage assessment.

ENGINEERING OFFICER
Hull's compromised. We're lucky to be alive, ma'am.

Deladier notices Carmen staring at a monitor, stunned. A DEAD CAP TROOPER trails in the wreckage of the flight deck.

DELADIER
Good work, Number 1. You'll do.

CARMEN
Thank you, ma'am.

INT BARRACK'S -- DAY -- JOHNNY

wears his civilian clothes, packs as the other recruits get ready for the day's training. No one says anything. He moves stiffly, careful of his back.

DIZZY
It stinks, you goin.

JOHNNY
I don't stay where I'm not wanted.

DIZZY
If they didn't want you, they woulda kicked you out, amigo.

JOHNNY
Hey, they humiliated me in front of everyone! I'm just supposed to take it, huh? Well, I'm not gonna, and I guess that proves I just can't cut it.

Corporal Bronski leans in, impassive.

BRONSKI
Your call's going through, Rico. Take it there.

A nearby VU-PHONE lights up. The screen flashes: **RINGING.** His mother appears when she picks up on the other end.

MOTHER
Hello... Oh, Johnny...!

JOHNNY
Hi, mom.

MOTHER
Bill... pick up... it's Johnny! You little rat. You haven't called, you haven't written. It's been so lonely here without you...

The screen splits as Johnny's father activates an extension.

FATHER
Johnny! Where's your uniform...?

Johnny's mother makes a face to shut him up.

FATHER
Well, it's just good to hear from you. What's up, son?

JOHNNY
It's not really working out for me here, dad. I was thinking... I was hoping it would be alright if I came home.

MOTHER
Well, of course you should come home immediately!

JOHNNY
I've made a mess of things. I've been so stupid...

FATHER
Don't talk like that. Get yourself home as fast as you can.

MOTHER
We'll all have dinner. I'll fix your favorite.

FATHER
Yeah! We'll talk it out, and have a good glass of wine... and... well, we love you, son.

The sky in Buenos Aires seems to darken perceptively. Johnny's mother looks out the window.

MOTHER
Oh, my, what's that?

FATHER
Looks like rain.

MOTHER
This time of year...?

The transmission ends abruptly. A phone company logo appears: TRANSMISSION TERMINATED.

VU-PHONE VOICE
Your transmission has been terminated due to atmospheric interference. Please try your call again later.

Johnny zips his duffel, hefts it gingerly over his shoulder.

JOHNNY
Well, see ya.

DIZZY
You take the stroll down Washout Lane, you're only proving one thing, Johnny.

JOHNNY
What's that, Diz?

DIZZY
That you don't have what it takes to be a citizen!

Dizzy turns on her heel and marches away.

96 OMIT SCENE 96

INT THE C.O.'S OFFICE -- DAY -- JOHNNY

signs form 1240/A. Zim stands as witness.

C.O.
Now you, Sergeant.

Zim signs bitterly. The C.O. sighs.

C.O.
That's it, son. You can go.

The C.O. and Zim turn to other things. Johnny picks up his duffel and heads out the door.

EXT PARADE GROUND -- DAY -- JOHNNY

walks alone, sad. A skimmer hums by overhead and he looks after it. Out across the parade ground he sees the glint of Marauder power suits as recruits tumble the obstacle course.

EXT WASHOUT LANE -- DAY -- JOHNNY

reaches the little white fence that leads to the transporter. He turns back for one last look and notices people running to the Communications shack. Kitten Smith runs by.

JOHNNY
Hey, Kitten, what's going on?

KITTEN
It's war!

EXT COMMUNICATIONS -- DAY -- JOHNNY

joins others to see what's on the Federal Net. Recruits non-coms, and officers gather without any sense of military decorum. People cry openly, among them Corporal Bronski.

OFFICIAL VOICE
...early estimates. Millions dead, a city in ruins...

On screen, the smoldering ruins of what was once a huge city.

JOHNNY
Oh, jeez, is that Geneva?

KATRINA
Goddam bugs whacked us, Johnny.

OFFICIAL VOICE
...Buenos Aires has been wiped off the Earth. Nothing lives in what was once called the Latin Paradise...

Johnny is horrified. Dizzy is suddenly standing next to him.

DIZZY
Aw, Johnny, geez... It's home.

OFFICIAL VOICE
The Federal Council met moments ago and voted unanimously for mobilization to destroy the Arachnid threat.

Johnny sets his jaw, turns and runs for the C.O.'s office.

INT C.O.'S OFFICE -- DAY -- THE C.O. AND ZIM

and other staffers watch the grim news unfold. Animation illustrates the insect treachery.

OFFICIAL VOICE
The meteor derived from here, near Klendathu, in the Arachnid's home system...

ZIM
I'm serious, sir. I'll go anywhere. I want combat.

C.O.
Forget it, Zim. We're gonna need you here. The only way you'll get a combat assignment is if you bust yourself to private. You get me?

ZIM
Yes, sir, I get you.

C.O.
What can I do for you, Rico?

JOHNNY
Sir, I wish to reconsider my request to drop out, sir.

C.O.
Sorry, son. I can't do it. You signed the 1240/A. It would be illegal.

JOHNNY
Sir, I know it was wrong. I didn't learn from one mistake and I made another, sir.
(then)
Sir, my family... my whole family was in Buenos Aires, sir.

Zim picks up Johnny's 1240/A off the C.O.'s desk.

ZIM
This your signature, Rico?

JOHNNY
Sir, yes it is, sir.

ZIM
Doesn't look like it to me.

Zim gives the C.O. a look. The C.O. shrugs, turns away, watching the news of coming war. Zim tears up the 1240/A.

ZIM
Get outa here, private.

FROM THE FEDERAL NET -- HUMANKIND GOES TO WAR!

Actual pictures of Buenos Aires: SURVIVORS pick through rubble, people wail, kids play tag in the ruins.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Out of the ashes of Buenos Aires comes first sorrow, then ANGER!

ANGRY PERSON
The only good bug is a dead bug!

OFFICIAL VOICE
Would you like to know more?

COMBAT -- VICTORY ON DANTANA!

A wounded CAP TROOPER, grim smile, flashes "V" for victory as his weary comrades carry him off the field.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Cap Troopers establish a foothold on Dantana, a planet system at the outer edge of the Arachnid Quarantine Zone. Casualties are high, but casualties won't stop the Mobile Infantry! Would you like to know more?

HOME FRONT -- KIDS KILL BUGS AND MOM IS GLAD!

MOM smiles as her CUTE KIDS stomp insects in the garden. FACTORY WORKERS turn out ordnance. PEOPLE line up to enlist.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Everyone's doing their share. Are you? The war effort needs your effort at work, at home, in your community. Would you like to know more?

LEADERSHIP -- SKY MARSHALL ANNOUNCES OFFENSIVE!

SKY MARSHALL DIENES, 72, addresses the FEDERAL COUNCIL.

SKY MARSHALL DIENES
We are a generation commanded by fate to defend humankind! We must meet the threat with our valor, our blood, with our very lives, to insure that human civilization, not insect, dominates this galaxy now and always.

The council rises to its feet for a standing ovation.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Sky Marshall Dienes announces plans for an offensive against Klendathu, source of the bug meteor that destroyed Buenos Aires.

LIVE BROADCAST -- AQZ -- FLEET BATTLE STATION TICONDEROGA

is a sprawling pre-fab structure covering several square kilometers of space where STARSHIPS are stacked in berths. Super title: **COUNTDOWN TO VICTORY.**

OFFICIAL VOICE
We now break net and take you live to Fleet Battle Station Ticonderoga deep inside the Arachnid Quarantine Zone.

INT BATTLE STATION -- NIGHT CYCLE -- THE CAMERA

follows the Net Correspondent as he works a corridor crowded with MOBILE INFANTRY and FLEET PERSONNEL.

NET CORRESPONDENT
No one here in the AQZ knows exactly when the invasion of Klendathu will occur, but everyone's talking about it, and the talk says tomorrow!

Newly minted cap troopers Johnny, Dizzy, Ace, and Kitten Smith happen along.

NET CORRESPONDENT
Here's a bunch of M.I. kids who look like they eat bugs for lunch!

DIZZY
Yum, yum yum...!

NET CORRESPONDENT
So you're not too worried about fighting the Arachnids...?

ACE
Hey, shoot a nuke down a bug hole, lotta dead bugs, am I right?

KITTEN SMITH
I just hope it's not over before we get in it!

NET CORRESPONDENT
Some say the bugs were provoked by human attempts to colonize within the AQZ, that a "live and let live" policy is preferable to war with the bugs...

JOHNNY
Yeah, well, I'm from Buenos Aires, and I say kill'em all!

INT RECREATION DECK -- NIGHT CYCLE -- JOHNNY

and his friends drink at a crowded bar. Around the room there's singing and dancing, a mad sort of revelry bred of fear and excitement, but nearby a VETERAN drinks alone.

KITTEN SMITH
That guy's been in it.

JOHNNY
How can you tell?

KITTEN SMITH
The eyes. He's got the 1000 meter stare.

He's hard and humorless, all wised up. Ace admires his LASER CUT TATTOOS. Dizzy eyes his skull and cross bone earring.

ACE
Great scars.

DIZZY
I like the jewelry. Hey, amigo, where can I get an earring like yours?

VETERAN
Port Joe Smith, Outer Rings, Dantana... Every time I come back from a drop, my gunny gives me a bone. I got three now. You don't see a lot of guys with three.

JOHNNY
What's it like... combat?

VETERAN
I guess it's not so bad. I mean, as long as you don't get any on you.

KITTEN SMITH
Get any what on you?

VETERAN
Oh, you'll know when it happens. See you on the bounce.

The Veteran pays his tab and heads out.

ACE
I say we all go to a laser parlor and get cut together.

JOHNNY
What do I want with a scar?

DIZZY
What, your skin's too pretty? C'mon, everyone's doing it!

CARMEN (V.O.)
Hey! Johnny! Johnny Rico!

Johnny looks up and sees Carmen. She looks great in uniform with the hat and the lieutenant's bars on her shoulders.

JOHNNY
Carmen...?

Johnny remembers himself, snaps to attention, salutes. Dizzy and the others follow suit. Carmen salutes back, sheepish.

CARMEN
Oh... at ease. Guess I oughta lose the hat when I'm off duty, eh?

Dizzy, disgusted, turns back to Ace and Kitten Smith. Carmen tucks her hat under her arm. Her hair is very short.

JOHNNY
What happened to your hair?

CARMEN
What do you think? Everyone did it when we got our wings. You don't like it, do you?

JOHNNY
It's alright, I guess. You hear from anyone made it out of B.A. alive?

Carmen shakes her head, sadly.

CARMEN
It's funny. Sometimes I forget. Then it hits me, and I can't stop crying.

JOHNNY
I try to just be happy I'm still alive.

CARMEN
You don't look very happy to see me.

JOHNNY
Should I be?

CARMEN
Johnny... Life is so different from the way it was. One day you'll see what I did was best for both of us.

Zander leaves a group of FLEET OFFICERS to join them.

ZANDER
Everything copesetic, Lieutenant?

CARMEN
Zander, you remember Johnny? Zander and I are a flight team now.

Zander puts his arm around Carmen, gives her a squeeze.

ZANDER
Best in the Fleet!

JOHNNY
I get it. This is the part that's best for both of us. Don't do me anymore favors, eh?

Johnny turns to leave.

CARMEN
Johnny, wait...

ZANDER
Forget it, Carmen. The Mobile Infantry does a thankless, dirty job, so they naturally tend to be short-tempered, thoughtless and rude.

Johnny turns back to face Zander.

JOHNNY
You got something to say about the Mobile Infantry?

ZANDER
You heard me. Wanna make something out of it, private?

JOHNNY
Not with an officer, no, sir. The M.I. doesn't mint stupid cap troopers.

Everyone can see what's about to happen. A circle is forming, Fleet on one side, Mobile Infantry on the other.

ZANDER
Let's disregard rank... Everybody hear that? Rank is not an issue here.

CARMEN
Zander, please... Let's go!

Zander takes off his hat.

ZANDER
It's alright. What's he gonna do?

WHAM! Johnny punches him right in the nose. Zander goes down, bleeding. Ace and Kitten Smith grab Johnny.

ACE
Whoa, easy there, buddy... Nice punch.

Zander staggers to his feet, ready to fight, but Fleet Officers pull him back. Carmen looks at Johnny, the hate in his eye, the blood on his fist.

CARMEN
What's wrong with you?

JOHNNY
Hey, it's just a vestigal response to procreation... bitch.

Carmen turns away, stung. Johnny immediately regrets. Dizzy, for her part, couldn't be happier.

DIZZY
Forget it, Johnny. Cap Troopers and Fleet weren't meant to mix!

INT LASER PARLOR -- NIGHT CYCLE -- JOHNNY

grinds his teeth as a laser mounted on a robot arm finishes slicing an intricate pattern into his arm.

JOHNNY
It hurts...!

Dizzy, Ace, and Kitten Smith watch, grinning, passing a bottle. Ace pours booze directly on the fresh wound.

ACE
No, <u>this</u> hurts.

JOHNNY
YAAAAAAAAAA!

KITTEN SMITH
Well, here's to it! We're gonna fight, and we're gonna win!

They put their arms side by side. Each has a similar scar: Lightning bolts on a shield and the words: **DEATH FROM ABOVE.**

ACE
Mobile Infantry rules!

JOHNNY
Death to all bugs!

DIZZY
Don't get any on you!

110 DELETE SCENE 110

111 DELETE SCENE 111

EXT KLENDATHU -- FROM SPACE -- FLEET STARSHIPS

of every class maneuver in tight orbit around the orange planet. The "Mobile Infantry Anthem" plays like Holst, pounding and relentless. The invasion has begun!

INT BULL RUN -- DROP ROOM -- JOHNNY

and his platoon, wearing fully armed MARAUDER POWER SUITS, wait to drop with other cap troopers. Their mood is grim. LIEUTENANT WILLY, 35, easy-going and confidant, enters.

ACE
Officer on deck!

Everyone snaps to attention.

LT. WILLY
At ease. Alright... we got hot poop straight from the top: Willy's Wildcats is in with the first wave. Means more bugs for us to kill...

This does nothing to break the tension. Lt. Willy reassures.

LT. WILLY
Now if you follow orders and remember your training, I guarantee you'll make it back alive. Any questions?

There are none.

LT. WILLY
Alright... next we got a little last minute briefing from Military Intelligence I think you're gonna like...

The briefing plays on "head up" displays and the ready room screens. A captive BUG WARRIOR clicks and shrieks as FEDERAL SCIENTISTS torture it. The troopers cheer.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Everyday Federal scientists are looking for new ways to kill bugs and you can help...

The head scientist turns and speaks to camera. It's Carl. Johnny and Dizzy share an amazed grin, noticing a difference in their old friend, something that speaks of... authority.

CARL
To defeat the enemy, we must know the enemy. Take for instance your basic Arachnid warrior. Minimal IQ, armored, completely lethal. You can blow a limb off...

Carl picks up a pulse gun and blows one of the bug's legs off. The insect screams.

CARL
...and it's still 86% combat effective. But here's a tip: Aim for the nerve stem and put it down for good.

Carl fires again. The bug kicks and squeals as it dies. Carl tosses the pulse gun aside.

CARL
Now while you're out killing bugs, we want you to be our eyes and ears. The bugs use some kind of plasma burst to divert meteors and aim them toward Earth. We need to know how they do this. If you encounter any plasma, report it immediately to your superior. Good luck and good hunting!

The briefing ends as klaxons sound.

P.A. (O.S.)
This is the Captain speaking. All personnel prepare for drop. We are at D minus three and counting.

LT. WILLY
Move out!

Johnny and the other troopers climb into capsules on the port track. Dizzy gives him "thumbs up". The capsule seals as it moves with others down the firing tube.

INT CAPSULE -- JOHNNY

gets the shakes as the capsule bumps and booms toward the firing tube. Lt. Willy appears on the "head up" display.

LT. WILLY
Smash the entire area, kill anything that has more'n a couple legs, and don't any of you loafers come back aboard with unexpended bombs. Get me?

JOHNNY ET AL
Yes, sir!

FIRE CONTROL (O.S.)
Five seconds...

Sweat rolls down his face, hyperventilation... WHAM!

EXT SPACE -- KLENDATHU ORBIT -- SILVER CAPSULES

stream toward Klendathu from the rear tubes starships of **Bull Run.** We move down the line past **Mannerheim, Dauntless, George Marshall,** and **Yamamoto** to the **Rodger Young.**

INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- CARMEN

holds Rodger Young in tight maneuver. Suddenly, a burst of BLUE BUG PLASMA rips past the starboard bow.

CARMEN
Plasma, ma'am... from the planet.

DELADIER
Bug batteries... According to Military Intelligence, it'll be random and light. Drop status?

ZANDER
Drop is 35% complete, ma'am.

Two more bursts of bug plasma streaks past.

DELADIER
Steady as she goes, Number 1.

EXT KLENDATHU -- HIGH ATMOSPHERE -- NIGHT -- THE CAPSULES

burn when they hit atmosphere, outer skin tearing away in big silver sheets.

INT CAPSULE -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY

takes in ENTRY DATA from the heads up display.

GUIDANCE COMPUTER (V.O.)
...surface in twenty-five seconds... LZ has been identified... beacon is in place...

INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- CARMEN

watches nervously as deadly bursts of bug plasma fill the heavens around the battle group. Below, the surface of Klendathu fairly bristles with outgoing defensive fire.

DELADIER
This isn't random or light. Someone made a mistake...!

ZANDER
That's it, we're empty, ma'am!

Out the front screens, a blast from below hits **George Marshall** amidships and it reels into **Yamamoto**. Both starships begin to burn.

DELADIER
Someone made a big goddam mistake! Get us out of here, Number 1!

Carmen dodges past burning ships, avoids collision with **Dauntless**, and then KA-WHAM! they're hit. Carmen flies out of her station and into CAMERA hard.

EXT KLENDATHU -- CLOUD LAYER -- NIGHT -- THE SECOND SKIN

tears away. Johnny is sitting on air.

GUIDANCE COMPUTER (V.O.)
...surface in fifteen seconds... deploying chute now...

The chute pops. Across the sky, lit by outgoing bug plasma, he can see hundreds of cap troopers in ordered rows drifting down into the cloud layer. It's quiet in the clouds, then:

EXT KLENDATHU -- NIGHT -- FROM THE AIR -- JOHNNY

looks down as he passes out of the clouds and sees the battlefield. Plasma blasts explode into the sky. THOUSANDS OF BUGS boil out of the ground to defend against the invader.

GUIDANCE COMPUTER (V.O.)
...surface in five... four... three...

Johnny burns his chute off, drops the last hundred feet and lands on the bounce.

EXT KLENDATHU -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY'S POV -- THE FLASH PULSE

of bug batteries, screaming voices on the com, concussions shaking the ground. None of it compares to the sound of his own racing HEARTBEAT. Lieutenant Willy shouts.

LIEUTENANT WILLY
Up there on the ridge! We'll nuke those bug positions from theAAAAAAAAA!

A HOPPER (an airborne Arachnid warrior with powerful rear legs and "pop out" wings for gliding) lands on Lieutenant Willy and cracks his head like a nut.

ACE
KILL IT!

Johnny and Ace open fire, backing away. Pulse rounds tear it apart, bug guts gushing.

JOHNNY
Lieutenant's bought the farm. Where's the Sarge...?

ACE
I didn't see him!

Now comes a flood of WORKERS building ever advancing fortifications, and with them, hundreds of deadly ARACHNID WARRIORS.

KITTEN SMITH
HERE THEY COME...!

DIZZY
Ace, what're we doing?

ACE
I uh... uh...

Dizzy and the others open fire simultaneously. The whole area goes white hot in the magnesium flash of so many pulse cannon. Shujumi fires wildly at the advancing insects.

SHUJUMI
YOU WANT SOME? HERE'S SOME! C'MON!

JOHNNY
Don't waste your ammo on the workers!

Shujumi can't hear. A warrior finds him, rips his leg off, hurls him back into the waiting jaws of the oncoming bugs.

SHUJUMI
AAAAAAAAAAAAA!

He fights, screaming. A claw reaches for his face, ripping the top of his head off.

KATRINA
Let's get out of here!

Now the ground opens behind her and a huge (6 meters) TANKER BUG lumbers up out of the ground, it's funnel-shaped snout extruding above multiple eyes.

DIZZY
Look out!

The tanker bug sprays and hits Katrina. She screams, collapsing as her legs melt out from under her.

KATRINA
AAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Warriors converge to feed on her. Ace wants to help her, but Johnny blocks him.

JOHNNY
C'mon, Katrina was right. We gotta get out of here!

EXT KLENDATHU -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY

and the other survivors on the bounce. The entire surface of Klendathu seems to be churning with insects as more and more bugs come to the surface to repel the invasion.

JOHNNY
It's a general retreat! The boats are coming down.

They come to the rear lines where the Net Correspondent and his CAMERAMAN are doing live coverage of the invasion.

NET CORRESPONDENT
We've just landed here on what cap troopers are calling "Big K" with the 6th Mobile Infantry Division. It's an ugly planet, a bug planet, a planet hostile to life as we know iGKKKKK!

The Correspondent is cut in half by a warrior. Johnny blows it away.

JOHNNY
Com'on, let's go! ON THE BOUNCE!

The cap troopers move out. Kitten Smith looks up as a purple beacon streaks across the sky.

KITTEN SMITH
I can see the beacon...!

ACE
Retrieval!

A hopper pounces on Kitten Smith, and he goes down screaming.

JOHNNY
KITTEN!

Johnny touches down, stares in horror as Kitten Smith's head rolls past his feet. Johnny opens up with his pulse cannon. The hopper attacks, puts a claw right through Johnny's thigh.

JOHNNY
AAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Crushing jaws close around him, crushing, cutting his flesh. Johnny brings the muzzle of the pulse gun under the hopper's nerve stem and SPLAT! blows its head apart.

DIZZY
Johnny! JOHNNY! WHERE ARE YOU?
JOHNNY! Johnny...!

But Dizzy can't find Johnny, and soon she's lost in the smoke. Johnny looks down at the terrible hole in his leg where bright arterial blood gushes.

JOHNNY
Medic... MEDIC...!

Now two more Arachnid warriors close in on him through the enveloping smoke. He fires his pulse rifle empty, and dropping it, crawls desperately, dragging his useless leg.

JOHNNY
Oh, God... Oh, God, help me... please help me...!

A third Arachnid warrior rears up in front of him, deadly jaws slashing down toward him, when suddenly it is blown to pieces in the blinding blast of a point-blank pulse cannon.

VOICE (O.S.)
Take my hand!

Johnny reaches out. A STEEL HAND takes his, dragging him back as bugs attack. His rescuer's pulse cannon thunders overhead. Bug parts fly as insects swarm in for the kill.

FADE OUT

FROM THE FEDERAL NET -- 100,000 DEAD IN ONE HOUR!

Actual pictures of the battlefield, man and insect lying dea together on the blood drenched plains of Klendathu.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Crisis for Humankind! Fleet officials admit they underestimated the Arachnid's defensive capability. Would you like to know more?

SKY MARSHALL RESIGNS!

Retiring Sky Marshall Dienes salutes incoming SKY MARSHALL TEHAT MERU, 75, before a gathering of the Federal Council.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Accepting responsibility for Klendathu, Sky Marshall Dienes resigns. His successor, Sky Marshall Tahat Meru, outlines her new strategy.

SKY MARSHALL MERU
Until we understand the Bug better, we must proceed with caution... We can ill afford another Klendathu.

SCIENTISTS SUSPECT MYSTERIOUS BRAIN BUGS!

FEDERAL SCIENTISTS display an organizational chart of the Arachnid species topped by a QUESTION MARK.

OFFICIAL VOICE
To explain the intelligent military actions of the Arachnids, Federal Scientists postulate the existence of a leadership caste... Brain Bugs!

SOMETIMES LOVED ONES DIE FOR A GOOD REASON!

Names scroll by designated KIA, WIA, and MIA accordingly.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Families of those who have died or become incapacitated by Federal Service are entitled to benefits! If you see the name of a loved one, please do not call. A Federation official will call you. Would you like to know more?

EXT FLEET BATTLE STATION TICONDEROGA -- THE RODGER YOUNG

limps to port, a huge chunk ripped out of its mid-section. Although stable, she flies inverted.

CARMEN (O.S.)
Ticonderoga, this is Rodger Young requesting approach vector...

TICONDEROGA C&C (O.S.)
Affirmative, Rodger Young... one zero zero niner five two... welcome back.

INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- ZANDER AND CARMEN

stare at the BATTLE-SCARRED STARSHIPS and BURNT-OUT HULKS that line the docks of Ticonderoga.

CARMEN
You know, we're lucky to be alive.

A bloody bandage wraps Carmen's head. Zander nods grimly.

INT RODGER YOUNG -- GANGWAY -- THE DEAD BODIES

of CREWMAN and CAP TROOPERS are being off-loaded via conveyer belt. Zander and Carmen make their way up the steep companionway beside the ghastly conveyer belt.

ZANDER
Give me a hand, wilya?

Carmen takes his hand. Zander kisses her.

ZANDER
I was thinking. Maybe we should get married, Carmen.

CARMEN
You weren't thinking... you were dreaming!

ZANDER
If we're gonna be a team, why not be a real team...?

CARMEN
There's a war on. I want a command, I want my own ship, you do, too...

ZANDER
So?

CARMEN
So who's got time to get married?

Carmen lets his hand go and leaps through the hatch. Zander falls back onto the conveyer belt, finds himself eyeball-to-eyeball with a horribly maimed trooper, scrambles to get off.

INT BATTLE STATION TICONDEROGA -- COMMON AREA -- ZANDER

joins Carmen in the crowded common area where dead bodies compete for space with wounded awaiting triage. Survivors watch casualty lists scroll by on a Federal Net terminal.

ZANDER
Fleet encourages marriage among flight officers. You'd probably get a promotion out of it.

CARMEN
Funny...

ZANDER
I'm not kidding. Marriage is --

CARMEN
No, funny there's almost no wounded at all.

ZANDER
Hey, bugs don't take prisoners.

Carmen looks at the words on the Net terminal: **WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE?** She bites her lip, enters Johnny's name. In an instant, she has the news: **RICO, John D. -- KIA.**

CARMEN
Oh no.

Tears fill her eyes.

ZANDER
Carmen...?

CARMEN
Excuse me...!

She rushes away. Zander looks at Johnny's name on the screen, shrugs, presses the ERASE button.

INT TICONDEROGA -- CORRIDOR -- ZANDER

finds Carmen, sagging against a wall, weeping.

ZANDER
I'm sorry, Carmen.

CARMEN
Please, I... Everybody's lost someone by now. This shouldn't be any different...

Zander puts his arm around her. She holds on tight.

CARMEN
No, I... Oh, Zander, I'm a fool.

ZANDER
You're upset, that's alright.

Zander kisses her hair. Tears roll down her face.

CARMEN
No, don't you see? No one can wait for anything anymore... You're right... We should get married...

Zander holds Carmen as she sobs, feeling lucky.

DISSOLVE TO:

133 OMIT SCENE 133

INT STASIS TANK -- DAY CYCLE -- JOHNNY'S BODY

floats, suspended in fluid, mouth hanging open, his skin white as death. A low underwater KNOCKING wakes him. He opens his eyes and sees Ace and Dizzy outside the tank.

Ace holds up a KIA list, pointing at Johnny's name, laughing: **Rico, John V. -- KIA.** Their voices are distant and garbled. Dizzy cups her hands against the side of the tank.

DIZZY
Two more days.

Johnny's wounds are now mostly scars except for his leg where delicate robotic arms culture layers of new tissue. Johnny gives a weak thumbs up. The knocking sound continues.

Johnny turns. A STEEL HAND taps the side of the tank. Johnny grins, astonished. The man wearing it is his former high school teacher, now a Lieutenant, Jean Rasczak.

134A EXT SPACE -- AQZ -- A BATTLE GROUP 134A

consisting of STARSHIPS, their tender, FREIGHTERS and other SUPPLY CRAFT.

135 OMIT SCENE 135

INT TROOP TRANSPORT -- M.I. QUARTERS -- JOHNNY

stows his gear along with Ace and Dizzy. Across the room, a collection of battle-hardened vets check out the newcomers.

ACE
Dizzy says you two knew this Rasczak character in Buenos Aires...

JOHNNY
He was our teacher... He was great.

ACE
Yeah, well, I hear he's a real nutbuster.

DIZZY
The Roughnecks killed more bugs than any outher outfit in 2nd Brigade... Only took 15% casualities on Big K.

They size up the Roughnecks. There are scars, power prosthetics, and one, big SUGAR WATKINS, 26, wears a bug claw on a chain around his neck.

JOHNNY
Seeing as how we're about all that's left of 1st Brigade, you'd have to call that an improvement.
(to Sugar Watkins)
You top kick?

SUGAR WATKINS
Are you kidding? They always get killed. You want the job?

JOHNNY
I wouldn't mind.

CORPORAL BIRDIE, 24, turns, gives Johnny the once over.

BIRDIE
I would. Nice earring.

Dizzy looks her over. Not too big, but she's tough.

DIZZY
Where you been besides Big K?

BIRDIE
Outer rings. Zegema Beach.

JOHNNY
I always wanted to go to Zegema Beach.

SUGAR WATKINS
Good luck. It's not there anymore.

ACE
Is your Lieutenant as bad as they say?

Birdie belts him, and Ace goes down.

BIRDIE
No one talks about the Lieutenant that way. He saved my life!

Ace jumps up, ready to fight, but other Roughnecks block him.

SUGAR WATKINS
Mine, too.

OTHER ROUGHNECKS
Same for me... me, too...

Johnny and Dizzy shrug. Ace's on his own.

ACE
Sounds like he's quite a guy.

SERGEANT GILLESPIE, 28, steps into the room.

GILLESPIE
Attention!

Everyone snaps to. Rasczak enters.

RASCZAK
This is for you new people. I only have two rules. Rule one, everyone fights. Rule two, no one quits. If you don't do your job, I'll kill you myself. Do you get me?

JOHNNY, DIZZY AND ACE
We get you, sir!

He points at Johnny's earring with his steel hand.

RASCZAK
Get rid of the jewelry. I hate it. Welcome to the Roughnecks.

BIRDIE
Rasczak's Roughnecks!

The Roughnecks cheer. Rasczak smiles vaguely.

RASCZAK
Alright. There's a new Sky Marshall and a new plan. We're gonna clean out the systems outlying Klendathu one planet at a time. Tomorrow we hit Tango Urilla. After Fleet glasses the planet, M.I. mops up.

EXT TANGO URILLA -- DAY -- BUG WARRIORS

stand sentry on earthworks that tower above the entrance their colony where an endless line of WORKERS enter bearing foodstuff appropriate to this exotic jungle planet.

A distant sound. A warrior looks up, curious. Suddenly, a FORMATION OF TAC FIGHTERS screams down from high orbit and a white hot nuclear firestorm burns consumes the landscape.

Bugs scream as they twist and kick in the wall of flame. Heat melts the dirt into dark glass. Ash turns the sky red. Then, out of the smoke, come Rasczak and his Roughnecks.

RASCZAK
Spread out, teams of three. When you locate a bug hole, secure it, gas it, and close it.

138 & 139 OMIT SCENE

EXT TANGO URILLA -- FLATS -- DAY -- TAC FIGHTERS

streak by overhead. On the ground, Johnny, Dizzy and Ace are on the bounce. Ace spots a bug hole where workers and warriors have broken through the glassed surface.

ACE
There.

Rockets take out warriors. Bug guts go flying. Dizzy sets workers on fire. Johnny and Ace step over burning bug carcasses to the rim of the hole and fire their gas rounds.

JOHNNY
Fire in the hole!

Johnny drops an H.E. round, and they're in the air when the explosion collapses the entrance to the bug city.

BIRDIE (O.S.)
You new guys get over here... we could use some help...

EXT TANGO URILLA -- MOUNTAINS -- DAY -- BUGS

boil out of the ground. Birdie, Sugar Watkins and other Roughnecks are about to be overrun when Johnny touches down with Ace and Dizzy.

JOHNNY
Looks like you've got a little bug problem, ma'am...

BIRDIE
Stow it, trooper. Give it everything you've got!

The cap troopers let the bugs have it, but the insects keep coming, the living crawling over the dead, and now, trudging up out of the ground, comes a TANKER BUG.

JOHNNY
WATCH OUT!

The tanker bug starts to spray, creating a toxic perimeter around the hole. Rasczak arrives just as Birdie takes a chemical hit, falling to the ground minus an arm, screaming.

BIRDIE
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Johnny jumps, landing behind the tanker bug in the mouth of the hole. It turns with surprising speed. Johnny flips up onto its back, cracks its armor with his pulse cannon.

RASCZAK
Sugar, in for pick up!

Rasczak and Sugar Watkins pull Birdie to safety. Johnny fires a rocket into the hole he's made in the tanker bug's back, and jumps clear. KA-WHAP! The big bug explodes.

RASCZAK
Gas that hole and close it!

The Roughnecks fire gas rockets into the bug hole. Johnny touches down beside Rasczak.

RASCZAK
Where'd you learn how to do that, soldier?

JOHNNY
Uni High Tigers, sir. Don't you remember? I was captain of the team.

RASCZAK
I'm not interested in nostalgia, Rico. I need a corporal. You're it until you're dead or I find someone better.

Rasczak turns away, gives Birdie prosthetic thumbs up as she is carried past to meet an arriving skimmer.

RASCZAK
Don't worry, Birdie, your next arm comes with a factory guarantee!

Dizzy and Ace gather around Johnny, clap him on the back.

DIZZY
Way to go, amigo!

JOHNNY
I'm gonna need a squad leader.

ACE
No way. Big K taught me I ain't executive material.

JOHNNY
What about it, Diz?

DIZZY
(a snappy salute)
Looks like I'm your girl, sir.

Tac Fighters reel by again overhead. WOMP! Suddenly, BUG PLASMA shoots skyward from the flatlands below. Several Tac Fighters are blown out of the air. Flaming debri rains down.

RASCZAK
Saddle up, Roughnecks. That's our trash!

Roughnecks head out on the bounce.

141 THRU 144 OMIT SCENES

144A EXT TANGO URILLA -- RIDGE -- DAY -- JOHNNY 144A

and the others look down a sheer cliff on the bug battery, a charred circular pit some ten meters across. Inside, something is moving.

JOHNNY
What kind of stinkin' bug is that?

Johnny jumps the magnification on his "head up". Down in the pit, a giant translucent PLASMA BUG rears out of one of the subterranean tunnels that ring the battery.

SUGAR WATKINS
You never seen how they do it before?

Johnny shakes his head. Swollen BREEDER BUGS gather around the plasma bug to inject it with their catalytic jelly.

ACE
Agghh! It's making me sick...!

The plasma bug writhes in pain and begins to swell, color changing from yellow to blue in accordance with some violent internal chemical reaction.

SUGAR WATKINS
It's gonna pop!

WOMP! The plasma bug explodes in its cauldron. A blast of bug plasma streaks past them towards the heavens. Now a new plasma bug crawls into the pit to begin the cycle anew.

GILLESPIE
Sir, look!

Sergeant Gillespie points. A hole opens near the battery and dozens of warriors rampage out of the ground and up the cliff face toward the Roughneck position.

RASCZAK
We must be right over the colony. Let's get some air support, eh?

GILLESPIE
Yes, sir! Fleet, this is Roughneck patrol, over...?

Rasczak moves off down the line giving orders.

RASCZAK
Corporal, I want pulse cannons there and there! Rifle teams, spread out along the ridge! Sugar, bring up that flame thrower!

GILLESPIE
Fleet's pulling the battle group back to safe distance... They'd like us to knock out those batteries, sir.

RASCZAK
They'd rather spend our lives than risk their ships. Who's got the nuke?

DIZZY
That'd be me, sir.

RASCZAK
Heat it up.

Dizzy activates a tactical nuke. It makes a distinctive HIGH-PITCHED SQUEAL.

ROUGHNECKS
Roughnecks, you may fire at will.

The Roughnecks open fire. Bugs are blown to pieces but they keep climbing. A warrior breeches their line. Sugar Watkins torches it. The nuke's ready light flashes

DIZZY
I'm hot, sir!

RASCZAK
FIRE! BLAST SHIELDS DOWN!

Johnny blows a warrior away from the edge. Dizzy leans over and fires. The rocket streak down toward the battery.

RASCZAK
HIT THE DIRT!

An explosion in the two kiloton range turns the world black and white. When color returns Johnny and the others look down on the smoldering crater which was once the bug battery.

GILLESPIE
Now comes the part I hate the most.

JOHNNY
What's that?

GILLESPIE
We go down into the colony and make sure all the queens are dead.

INT TUNNELS -- DAY -- THE ROUGHNECKS

fight their way down gassed-out tunnels into bug city. They meet warriors at every turn and kill them. Helmet lamps make weird shadows of dead bugs piled everywhere along the way.

SUGAR WATKINS
You knew the Lieutenant before the war... What was he like?

JOHNNY
He was a teacher, kind of a know it all... Always had this little smile.

SUGAR WATKINS
Geez, I don't think I've ever seen him smile.

JOHNNY
Must fill your bottle up real quick
when your wife and kids get smeared.

Johnny joins Rasczak, Ace and Dizzy and they blow away several warriors guarding the entrance of a large chamber.

INT BUG NURSERY -- DAY -- THE QUEENS

are eight meters long with corpulent bodies and tiny heads. Only one survives, and though she is herself dying, her abdomen, rippled by life within, continues to undulate.

JOHNNY
All dead except one, sir.

RASCZAK
Kill the bitch.

JOHNNY
Yes, sir.

Johnny signals. Dizzy's pulse cannon rips open the dying queen. Thousand of wriggling premature bugs come spilling out. Horrified, knee-deep Roughnecks set them afire.

EXT TANGO URILLA -- BASE CAMP -- DAY -- FLEET ENGINEERS

unload PRE-FAB BARRACKS from HERCULES CARGO BOATS. Roughnecks eat. Rasczak stands, banging a spoon on his mess kit.

RASCZAK
Tango Urilla is now bug free. Means
the Roughnecks have killed a helluva
lotta bugs...!

Roughnecks cheer. Rasczak kicks open a CARGO MODULE. Beer kegs roll out. He kicks open a second module. Inside, musical instruments. Ace picks up a violin.

RASCZAK
I expect the best, but I give the
best. Have some fun. That's an
order!

EXT BASE CAMP -- NIGHT -- LATER -- ACE

leads a little quartet, plays a sweet fiddle. Roughnecks laugh and dance. Dizzy tries to pull Johnny into the fun.

DIZZY
C'mon...

JOHNNY
Nah, I don't do that anymore...

DIZZY
You used to dance...

JOHNNY
I said no. Want me to pull rank?

DIZZY
Well, excuse me, sir...

Dizzy heads back to the others. Johnny turns and finds Rasczak regarding him with an odd, sad smile.

RASCZAK
You ask me for some advice once, Rico. Want some now?

JOHNNY
Yes, sir...

RASCZAK
Never pass up a good thing, eh?

Gillespie appears.

GILLESPIE
Lieutenant, Brigade's on the com...

Rasczak heads away. Johnny joins Dizzy.

JOHNNY
Hey, Diz...

DIZZY
What?

Johnny takes her hand, bows implishly.

JOHNNY
May I have the honor?

He pulls her out among the others and they begin to dance. Ace watches with a grins, puts some spirit in his fiddle.

149 OMIT SCENE 149

149A INT COMMUNICATIONS -- NIGHT -- RASCZAK 149A

is in holo conference with an INTELLIGENCE OFFICER.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER
At 0821 we received a distress call from Planet P, priority code, requesting reinforcement...

RASCZAK
I thought 4th brigade cleaned out P.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER
Owen reported the eradication of a low generation colony a month ago. That's why MICOM wants onsite assessment.

RASCZAK
Sounds more like some idiot at Military Intelligence Command wants to get me and my cap troopers killed...

The Intelligence Officer reddens.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER
Take your group down to P and have a look see. Leave the thinking to us, Lieutenant. That's not your job.

RASCZAK
My job is to protect the lives of my soldiers so they can kill bugs, Major, and if you're walking me into a trap--

INTELLGENCE OFFICER
Bugs don't lay traps! They aren't intelligent! Unlike you, they're stupid enough to follow orders!

VOICE (O.S.)
That'll be all, Major. Dismissed.

The Intelligence Officer dissappears abruptly. A new hologram appears. Rasczak's jaw drops. It's his former student Carl Jenkins, now a Colonel, weary and pissed off.

CARL
This conference is over. Do your duty, Lieutenant. That's an order.

Rasczak recovers, salutes stiffly.

RASCZAK
Yes, sir.

INT PRE-FAB SLEEPING UNIT -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND DIZZY

are making love. The door pops open. Rasczak stands there. Dizzy ducks under the covers. Johnny manages a salute.

RASCZAK
Corporal, the Roughnecks are moving out for Planet P immediately. Get yourself squared away and report to Gillespie for logistics.

JOHNNY
Yes, sir!

RASCZAK
Who's that with you?

Dizzy shows herself, grinning.

RASCZAK
Report in ten minutes.

Rasczak slams the door shut on them. They fall back into one anothers arms, laughing as they resume lovemaking.

DIZZY
Planet P? What kind of name is that?

JOHNNY
They ran out of names a long time ago in this part of the galaxy.

EXT PLANET P -- BAD LANDS -- DAY -- THE ROUGHNECKS

move through canyons of towering wind-carved rock formations. Gillespie carries the communications package.

GILLESPIE
I don't understand it, Lieutenant. I'm not getting anything from 4th Brigade... not even their transponder.

RASCZAK
Keep trying, Sergeant.

EXT CANYON RIM -- CONTINUING -- DAY -- THE ROUGHNECKS

walk in a column far below. Something is watching from the above... HOPPERS, lots of them, moving from rock to rock for better position.

EXT CANYON FLOOR -- CONTINUING -- DAY -- ACE

sees something out of the corner of his eye.

JOHNNY
BUGS...!

The hoppers hit. Several Roughnecks go down. Everyone opens up. Dive-bombing bugs are blown to bits. Roughnecks set them on fire when they hit the ground.

DIZZY
Johnny, watch out!

A burning bug hurls itself at Johnny. Johnny jumps out of the way as Dizzy fires, blowing it apart. The deadly hoppers seem to be everywhere above them in the rocks.

RASCZAK
LET'S GO! ON THE BOUNCE!

EXT FLAT LANDS -- DAY -- THE ROUGHNECKS

move out into the open. In the distance they see 4th Brigade HQ, a walled compound and partially constructed landing pad.

RASCZAK
Gillespie, put in a call for retrieval. We're off this rock. Gillespie, do you read me?

GILLESPIE
AAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Two hoppers are pulling Gillespie up into the rocks where other bugs join to feast.

RASCZAK
Throw me a rifle!

Dizzy tosses her Morita to Rasczak. Gillespie writhes in the hopper's claws. Rasczak fires, killing Gillespie.

RASCZAK
I expect any one here to do the same for me... Rico, Watkins, Flores, Levy prepare for rear guard action. The rest of you make for 4th Brigade.

Johnny and the others cover the Roughneck retreat as hoppers soar down on the flat lands from the canyon walls.

RASCZAK
FIRE...!

Johnny and the others blast bugs out of the air.

RASCZAK
FALL BACK 100 METERS...!

A second wave of hoppers come in.

RASCZAK
AND FIRE...!

For now, the sky is clear.

RASCZAK
4TH BRIGADE HQ! ON THE BOUNCE!

EXT 4TH BRIGADE HQ -- DAY -- THE OUTPOST

is 50 meters by 100, standard issue pre-fab. The Roughnecks land on the compound wall. Inside, WORKER BUGS graze on the remains of 200 dead cap troopers strewn over the complex.

RASCZAK
Jeez, Command really humped the bunk on this one...

Rasczak turns away. Roughnecks engage in the sport of methodically killing the workers.

RASCZAK
Rico, you're acting Sergeant now. My last Sergeant lost the com pack. Put together a search team and find the radio shack. We need retrieval.

JOHNNY
Yes, sir.

INT 4TH BRIGADE HQ -- OFFICE COMPLEX -- DAY -- JOHNNY

surveys the aftermath of a last stand with Rasczak, insect and human dead everywhere.

DIZZY (O.S.)
It's here, sir.

INT COMMUNICATIONS -- DAY -- RASCZAK AND JOHNNY

enter the radio room. A DEAD MAJOR is slumped over the console with a hole in the back of his head. Johnny checks the equipment. It's dead, too.

JOHNNY
Diz, see what you can do.

DIZZY
I'm on it!

Dizzy goes to work. Rasczak checks the wound in the back of the dead major's head.

RASCZAK
What's that look like to you, Rico?

JOHNNY
Looks like a bug was in his brain, sir.

ACE (O.S.)
Lieutenant, I think you're gonna wanna see this, sir.

INT MESS HALL -- DAY -- A BUG HOLE

in the middle of the floor is surrounded by carnage.

ACE
Dirty bugs came in right when they were having chow!

RASCZAK
Gas that hole and seal it.

Then they hear a sound. Tap tap tap. Rasczak signals for quiet. Tap tap tap tap. It's coming from the kitchen.

INT KITCHEN -- DAY -- THE ROUGHNECKS

enter cautiously. The noise is coming from a freezer. Ace stands ready to fire. Johnny levers open the door, jumps back as GENERAL OWEN, 60, tumbles out face first.

ACE
Officer on the deck, sir.

RASCZAK
Pick up the general!

Roughnecks prop him up. General Owen tries to talk, but no words come out. Rasczak bends down to listen.

GENERAL OWEN
Get out... you gotta get me out...!

RASCZAK
General Owen, sir?

The old man grins, hugely relieved.

GENERAL OWEN
At ease, Lieutenant. Thank God for you, all of you... this is grand... so where's the boat?

INT COMMUNICATIONS -- HALLWAY -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND RASCZAK

help the old General, now wrapped in a blanket, rambling.

GENERAL OWEN
I was forced to hide, of course. The security of the Federation in this theater of operations was at stake!

JOHNNY
Diz, what's with the uplink?

Dizzy looks up from where he's working on the radio console.

DIZZY
Workin on it...!

GENERAL OWEN
They get in your mind... they make you do things! Look here... They did it to Farley...!

He points at the hole in the dead major's head.

RASCZAK
The distress call... The bugs wanted us to rescue you...!

GENERAL OWEN
Oh, you can be sure of it! They were biding their time... waiting for the most opportune moment!

Rasczak's lost interested in the general. He's on the com.

RASCZAK
To all Roughnecks, this is Rasczak. Prepare for attack. Repeat. We are going to be attacked...!

GENERAL OWEN
They weren't gonna do it to me. Oh no! I know too many secrets!

Rasczak looks at General Owen with contempt.

SUGAR WATKINS (O.S.)
Fire in the hole!

An explosion in the mess hall closes the bug hole.

EXT OFFICE COMPLEX -- DAY -- GENERAL OWEN

blinks as he steps out into the light. Roughnecks snap to attention. General Owen looks at the carnage that was once his command and begins to keen, collapsing to his knees.

GENERAL OWEN
Oh God...! My soldiers...! All of my boys and girls...!

The Roughnecks are shocked. They've never seen a general break down before. Lieutenant Rasczak slaps Owen hard.

LT. RASCZAK
SHUT UP! Your soldiers're dead and you're not!

GENERAL OWEN
I know... I wish you'd shoot me...

LT. RASCZAK
I oughta!

And it looks like Rasczak just might, but just then Ace touches down next to Johnny and Rasczak.

ACE
Lieutenant, we got trouble!

EXT RAMPARTS -- DAY -- RASCZAK

and Johnny join other stunned Roughnecks to see THOUSANDS OF BUGS on the march from every direction. Bug batteries open up in the distance.

RASCZAK
Warm it all up! Everything you got! Levy, collect the big guns from the towers. Watkins, put General Owen with the wounded. Rico, where's my communications?

JOHNNY
What's going on, Diz?

DIZZY (O.S.)
I got power! Gimme a minute!

Johnny runs for the communications room.

JOHNNY
We don't have a minute!

INT COMMUNICATIONS -- DAY -- DIZZY

has the board up. Outside the battle has begun. Nukes go WOMP! and pulse guns chatter.

DIZZY
What frequency?

JOHNNY
All bands.

DIZZY
Roughneck patrol to battle group...
Roughneck patrol to battle group...

RODGER YOUNG (O.S.)
This is Rodger Young... What's going on down there? We're taking plasma! We have Orion P-11 as clear!

JOHNNY
SHUT UP, SIR! We need pick up now!

RODGER YOUNG (O.S.)
What is your position?

JOHNNY
Landing zone is extremely hostile. Come down on this transmission!

RODGER YOUNG (O.S.)
Inside 4th Brigade compound? That's crazy!

JOHNNY
Then I hope you have a crazy pilot! Keep the line open, Dizzy!

Johnny races out the door.

EXT 4TH BRIGADE HQ -- DAY -- THE COMPOUND

is white hot as Roughnecks on the walls unload nukes. Johnny crosses the compound, lands next to Rasczak on the wall.

JOHNNY
Boat coming down, sir!

The Roughnecks stop firing as they run out of nukes.

ROUGHNECKS
I'm empty... all nuked out... Me, too!

Johnny scans the battlefield. Nukes have turned the surface into dark glass. Now, out of the smoke, come the bugs, steaming glass cracking beneath millions of marching feet.

ACE
Jeez, we musta killed a million already...!

JOHNNY
Not enough, I guess.

Sugar Watkins sees General Owen in the compound below, stumbling aimlessly among his dead soldiers.

SUGAR WATKINS
General! GENERAL, stay with the wounded... Sir, the general...!

RASCZAK
Ah, the hell with him...

Hoppers sweep into the compound. The Roughnecks open fire. General Owen makes easy pickings for ones that get through.

RASCZAK
Fall back... form a circle! If no living bug comes over that wall, we cannot be harmed.

Dizzy arrives on the bounce as the Roughnecks fall back into the compound. Bugs pile in over the walls. The circle affords them 360 degrees of kill zone.

RASCZAK
Rico, Flores, Watkins, Levy! We control the sky until retrieval!

JOHNNY ET AL
Yes, sir!

Rasczak, Sugar Watkins, Johnny and Dizzy stand back-to-back in the center of the circle, sweeping the skies with the heavy guns from the towers. Hoppers are blown to pieces.

ACE
Getting low here, sir!

DIZZY
300 rounds and counting, sir!

RASCZAK
Make every shot count!

Johnny looks up. A RETRIEVAL BOAT hurtles down through bursts of bug plasma, takes a grazing hit, rights itself with retros and lands within the circle. Roughnecks cheer, saved!

RASCZAK
Sergeant, secure the boat!

JOHNNY
Yes, sir!

Roughnecks move to protect the boat. The hatch blows open.

RASCZAK
Board the wounded!

Dead bugs ring the compound walls, forming ramps for living insect soldiers to enter the compound in greater numbers.

RASCZAK
Move to retrieval on my command!
First group, now...!

The circle shrinks as Roughnecks fall back and board the boat. More and more bugs pile in over the compound walls.

RASCZAK
Alright, Flores! Levy! Rico...!

Suddenly, the ground collapses under Rasczak. He falls in to his waist, vomits blood as something chews on him from below.

RASCZAK
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

JOHNNY
Cover us, Ace!

Ace and the others fire from the boat. Johnny and Dizzy fire at the ground around Rasczak. Rasczak stops screaming. They try to pull him free.

JOHNNY
Hit your jets, sir!

RASCZAK
I can't. My legs are gone... Get on the boat...

The compound wall collapses. A wave of bugs charges in.

RASCZAK
Rico, tell'em to glass this goddam planet. I've never seen so many bugs upstairs at the same time...

JOHNNY
We're not leaving you here, sir!

Weakly, Rasczak picks up his pulse gun, checks the power.

RASCZAK
This is my farm. Get on the boat, NOW! That's an order, Sergeant.

JOHNNY
Give'em hell, sir!

Johnny and Dizzy run for the boat. Rasczak opens fire, picking his shots, but soon the bugs are all over him.

RASCZAK
C'mon you sons of bitches! There's no bug alive can kill a real mAAAAAAAAAA!

At the boat, Dizzy turns to look back at Rasczak. A hopper swoops down on Dizzy, it's claws ripping into her abdomen.

DIZZY
AAAAAAAAAA! GET IT OFF ME GET IT OFF GET IT OFF GET IT AAAAAAAAAAA!

Johnny blows the bug off her back. Blood sprays from a deep gash in her neck. Johnny picks her up, tries to stop the blood with his hand. The life is leaving her eyes.

JOHNNY
Hang on, Diz... don't die on me...

A TANKER BUG breeches the broken wall. Ace jumps out to help his friends. The hatch closes just as the tanker bug sprays. The boat blasts off, dripping metal.

INT BOAT -- CARGO BAY -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND ACE

drag Dizzy aboard. The hatch ratchets shut. Outside, bugs cover the boat. BLAST OFF! The boat heads for orbit. Johnny holds Dizzy in his arms, drenched in her blood.

DIZZY
I bought the farm, didn't I, Johnny?

JOHNNY
No, you're gonna be alright, Diz!

DIZZY
It's alright 'cause I got to have you, Johnny...

MEDICS push Johnny aside, go to work on Dizzy.

INT BOAT -- COCKPIT -- DAY -- JOHNNY

slams into the cockpit. Out the front screen, violent bursts of BUG PLASMA fill the sky as thery break atmosphere.

JOHNNY
Get on the com and tell Fleet to glass that rock...!

The co-pilot turns around. It's Zander. His eyes narrow.

ZANDER
On whose authority, Corporal?

JOHNNY
That would be mine, sir. Acting Sergeant John Rico. I've assumed command of this mission.

The pilot turns around. It's Carmen.

CARMEN
Johnny...! I thought you were dead!

JOHNNY
I'm not, but a lot of my soldiers are. Glass the planet!

Johnny leaves. Carmen punches up Fleet Command.

CARMEN
Rodger Young, this is inbound shuttle De Ruyter with an official request from the Mobile Infantry to bombard Planet P-11...

166A INT BOAT -- CARGO BAY -- DAY -- JOHNNY 166A

returns to Dizzy's side as the medics struggle to save her. Blood pours out of her mouth. Her body thrashes.

DIZZY
JOHNNY HEH HEH CAN'T HEH BREATHE HEH GOD JOHNNY CAN'T HEH HEH HEH HEH...!

Dizzy dies. A Medic slaps her. Her head lolls, mouth open, eyes blank. They drop her and move on to the next casualty. Johnny sits there, stunned. Carmen enters from the cockpit.

CARMEN
Negative on your request. Fleet Command has the battle group on standby...

Carmen sees Dizzy lying dead on the deck.

CARMEN
...I'm sorry.

JOHNNY
We gotta choke on the mud and the blood and Fleet can't be bothered to spit.

CARMEN
No, I think something's up. The Sky Marshall's here.

She points out a viewing port. Johnny looks. Fifteen battle groups, 100 ships strong, lay off Planet P, all of them dwarfed by the Sky Marshall's flagship, Buenos Aires.

CARMEN
I thought you were KIA, Johnny...

JOHNNY
That was just a mix up.

CARMEN
You look so... I don't know, you look like you've really been in it.

JOHNNY
What happened to your eye?

Carmen touches the scar over her eye.

CARMEN
Almost got knocked out of the sky over Big K.

JOHNNY
I like it. It's kinda... you.

EXT BATTLE GROUP -- ORION SYSTEM -- THE BOAT

lands on the flight deck of the Rodger Young in the midst of the flotilla.

INT OFFICERS QUARTERS -- DAY CYCLE -- ZANDER

enters, watches Carmen dress. She hums as she checks herself in the mirror, touches the scar over her eye, smiles.

ZANDER
Where are you going?

CARMEN
A funeral.

ZANDER
That girl who died on the way up... his girl?

CARMEN
Yeah.

ZANDER
How do you feel about him now?

CARMEN
I don't know, Zander.

ZANDER
I do.

INT RODGER YOUNG -- GUNNERY DECK -- CARMEN

enters as Johnny speaks. Dizzy is laid out in dress gray. The surviving Roughnecks have gathered to pay final respects.

JOHNNY
Dizzy bought the farm. She was my good friend, and friends are the best luck anyone gets... But in war, we must go on without our friends. We take with us their memory, and we are left to wonder if there is meaning in their death. Let me tell you what it is: Dizzy bought the farm so we can keep on fighting.

Several INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS march into the bay.

JOHNNY
Officer of deck!

Everyone snaps to attention. Colonel Carl Jenkins strides into the room. His eyes are hollow, and he looks grim. He returns Johnny's salute, nods to Carmen.

CARL
Please continue, Sergeant.

JOHNNY
Dizzy wouldn't want our tears. She'd want us to remember her... with a vengence. So go out and kill a bug for Dizzy. Kill as many as you can. You are her revenge, and every bug you kill honors her death.

Johnny nods to the GUNNERY CREW. They load Dizzy's body into a tube. Johnny steps back, salutes Dizzy. Everyone salutes.

JOHNNY
Womb to tomb, cap trooper!

ROUGHNECKS
Womb to tomb!

The CREW CHIEF fires the tube. Out the viewports, A PULSE OF LIGHT disperses in space. The Roughnecks file out. Carl approaches. Carmen takes Johnny and Carl by the hand.

CARMEN
Well, look at this. The three of us back together again.

JOHNNY
How are you, Carl?

CARL
Johnny, I'm sorry it had to be your unit on Planet P. That mission had a very low survival probability...

JOHNNY
Bugs laid a trap, didn't they?

CARL
Elegant proof of intelligence, isn't it?. We thought there might be a Brain on P.

CARMEN
You knew and you sent them anyway?

CARL
A colony has to reach a certain size before it produces a Brain... we think 300 generations. Woulda been too expensive to launch an operation if there wasn't a Brain...

Carl sees the way Carmen is looking at him, like he's a bug.

CARL
You don't approve. Well, too bad. We're in this for the species, boys and girls. It's simple numbers, they have more, and everyday I have to make decisions that send hundreds of people like you to their deaths.

JOHNNY
Didn't they tell you, Colonel? That's what cap troopers are good for.

Carl allows himself a tiny smile.

CARL
Hope you're ready for more. We're going back to P to capture that Brain.

JOHNNY
The Roughnecks are always ready, sir.

CARL
I hear they need a new Lieutenant... Want the job?

JOHNNY
I'll take it... until I get killed or you find someone better.

KLAXONS sound. Suddenly, everyone has someplace to go.

CARMEN
Hope you get your Brain Bug, Carl.

CARL
It's good to see you two. It reminds me of the way things were before...

Carl turns abruptly and heads away. His entourage follows.

CARMEN
Take care, wilya Johnny?

JOHNNY
See you on the bounce!

169A INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND & CONTROL -- CARMEN 169A

steps onto the bridge. There's a new NUMBER 2 sitting in Zander's chair. She's right out of Tereshkova, and she looks scared. Carmen turns to Captain Deladier.

CARMEN
Where's Lieutenant Barcalow?

DELADIER
He requested a combat assignment. There's always a need for experienced pilots on the ground. I had no choice but to let him go... He said you'd understand.

Carmen bites her lip, takes first chair. Deladier feels bad for her, knows she's made a painful decision.

INT RODGER YOUNG -- DROP ROOM -- ROUGHNECKS

are suiting up. Ace enters.

ACE
Officer on the deck!

Roughnecks fall in. Johnny steps into the room. There are many new and much younger faces.

JOHNNY
I only have two rules. Rule one, everyone fights. Rule two, no one quits. If you don't do your job, I'll kill you myself. Do you get me?

ROUGHNECKS
We get you, sir!

JOHNNY
(to Ace, sotto voce)
Who're all these kids?

ACE
We got reinforced. Most of'em just got outa boot...

JOHNNY
We're the old men, Ace.

EXT PLANET P -- 4TH BRIGADE HQ -- DAY -- CARGO SHIPS

have landed. Cap troopers set fire to huge piles of dead bugs. BULLDOZERS push bodies into a mass grave, among them Rasczak. Johnny walks past with his team.

JOHNNY
We'll take this high ground. Lookouts there and there and up there. If the bugs come upstairs in this neighborhood, we'll be the first to know.

ACE
Got it. Fleet tactical wants to know where they can deploy the skimmers.

JOHNNY
Down there on the flats, eh? Listen up, Roughnecks! Our primary objective is to assist our friends from the Fleet...

Roughnecks boo.

JOHNNY
Alright, cut it out. We will deploy from skimmers in teams of six. If the bugs open up a battery, we put it out of business. Any questions?

A HERCULES CARGO BOAT hurtles out of the sky and lands on the high ground Johnny had intended for his H.Q. Johnny scowls, marches over to the boat and confronts a FLEET OFFICER.

JOHNNY
Would'ya mind moving your boat?

FLEET OFFICER
Better talk to the boss.

The cargo bays open to deploy FLEET SKIMMERS. Zander jumps down to oversee the operation.

JOHNNY
You're standing on my HQ, Lieutenant!

ZANDER
This is a Fleet-driven operation, son, and the Fleet thinks my boat will be safer on the high ground. You can have everything else, eh?

JOHNNY
You heard the Sky Marshall... Move it all down --

Suddenly, in the distance, bug batteries open fire, not one but twenty. Zander and Johnny share a look of concern.

ZANDER
Rodger Young, prepare to receive outgoing fire...!
(to his crew chief)
I'll take the first group.

JOHNNY
Saddle up, boys, that's our trash!

EXT SPACE -- PLANET P ORBIT -- BUG PLASMA

begins to take a toll on the battle group as the orbiting ships lay their eggs. Cap Troopers are sliced as they drop.

EXT RODGER YOUNG -- BRIDGE -- CAPTAIN DELADIER

turns to Carmen.

DELADIER
Evasive action!

Carmen dodges other starships, turns to her new number 2.

CARMEN
Prepare for warp!

NEW NUMBER 2
Yes, ma'am! Warp in 5... 4... 3...!

KA-WHAM! The Rodger Young takes a direct hit.

EXT RODGER YOUNG -- PLANET P ORBIT -- THE RODGER YOUNG

is cut in two. The rear section explodes, the forward section begins to burn towards the bridge.

INT RODGER YOUNG -- BRIDGE -- CAPTAIN DELADIER

calmly evacuates the bridge. Power fails and so does the gravity.

CARMEN
This is Rodger Young, we're going down... Repeat, this is Rodger Young, we're going down...!

DELADIER
Ibanez... LET'S GO!

INT RODGER YOUNG -- ESCAPE CORRIDOR -- CARMEN

and Captain Deladier run for the lifepods. An explosion flips the corridor. Captain Deladier's leg is crushed when an airlock closes on her.

DELADIER
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Carmen hits the release, pulls her free. Deladier pushes Carmen away.

DELADIER
Leave me, Lieutenant! That's an order!

CARMEN
No way, ma'am!

Carmen decks the Captain, knocks her out, drags her.

176A INT RODGER YOUNG -- LIFE POD BAY -- CARMEN 176A

pushes into the chaotic life pod bay. PANICKED CREW shoving, screaming, fighting. The ship pitches. They tumble, landing near a pod. Carmen jumps for it, pulls Deladier in after.

EXT RODGER YOUNG -- PLANET P ORBIT -- THE RODGER YOUNG

disintegrates as lifepods shoot away toward the planet.

INT LIFEPOD -- PLANET P ORBIT -- CARMEN

navigates through a graveyard of floating wreckage, dead cap troopers, someone's trombone. She sets her beacon and the pod plummets downward.

CARMEN
Mayday, mayday! This is Lieutenant Carmen Ibanez in lifepod RY63... I'm going in...

EXT PLANET P -- BASE CAMP -- DAY -- ROUGHNECKS

board the Skimmers. Zander approaches Johnny, upset.

JOHNNY
What's your problem now, Lieutenant?

ZANDER
The Rodger Young just burned up...

Johnny's face falls.

JOHNNY
Any survivors?

Zander points. Far in the distance, a glowing pod plummets toward the planet. Johnny tracks it on his "head up".

INT LIFEPOD -- ATMOSPHERE -- DAY -- CARMEN

is shaken violently as the pod hits atmosphere.

EXT PLANET P -- DAY -- CARMEN'S POD

hits and goes straight through the crust of Planet P.

INT BUG CITY TUNNELS -- DAY -- THE POD

comes to rest. Carmen blows the hatch, pulls Deladier out, grabs a Morita pusle rifle. Tunnels lead in every direction.

CARMEN
This is Lieutenant Carmen Ibanez. Is anyone receiving?

EXT BASE CAMP -- DAY -- JOHNNY

grabs the handset from Ace.

JOHNNY (O.S.)
Affirmative! Carmen, this is Roughneck Base Camp... What is your present location?

INT BUG CITY TUNNELS -- DAY -- CARMEN

sees a warrior coming at her from out of the shadows. Carmen fires a burst and kills it. Now there are two. Carmen backs up firing, but there are too many.

CARMEN
My present location is 42 degrees South by 176 degrees East... situation is extremely hostile... I... AAAAAAAA!

They have her. She puts the barrel of her Morita in her mouth, but a claw cuts her trigger finger off at the knuckle.

EXT PLANET P -- ROUGHNECK BASE CAMP -- DAY -- JOHNNY

and Zander are horrified by what they hear.

CARMEN (O.S.)
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

JOHNNY
We've gotta go get her!

ZANDER
You know as well as I do she's probably already dead.

Johnny knows its true, swallows bitterly, turns away. That's when he sees it. Nearby, the ground shifts, a claw breaks through, a hole opens up and bugs boil up out of the ground.

SUGAR WATKINS
Here they come!

They turn and see a second bug hole open up.

JOHNNY
We're outa here. Lieutenant, get your men into the skimmers. This real estate's about to go buggy.

ZANDER
Hey, just calm down, I'm giving the orders here --

The entire area underneath the base camp collapses to form a huge new canyon. The Hercules boat topples, crushing Skimmers and unfortunate Fleet personnel.

EXT NEW CANYON -- DAY -- JOHNNY

and the surviving Roughnecks pick themselves up. They are now 30 meters below the planet's surface. Above them, bugs line the wide rim of the newly formed canyon.

JOHNNY
FORM A PERIMETER!

Through the dust, exposed bug tunnels can be seen in the canyon walls and piling out of them by the score, deadly Arachnid warriors. Johnny throws Zander a pulse cannon.

JOHNNY
Make yourself useful, fly boy... PREPARE TO REPEL BUGS!

The Roughnecks open fire at the charging bug horde. Warriors are blown to pieces. Gas grenades fly and H.E. rounds close tunnels. A maimed warrior gets through and heads for Zander.

ZANDER
AAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Johnny and Ace team up to blow it away. Zander takes a deep breath, looks around, impressed. The Roughnecks have killed a great many bugs.

JOHNNY
Ace, get on the com. Tell Fleet we need retrieval... Sugar, salvage some armor and suit up Lieutenant Barcalow.

Sugar Watkins tosses a bloody jump boot his way.

ZANDER
Thanks.

ACE
Fleet Command says retrieval's no go. The battle group's at safe distance... and we got another problem.

Ace points out a Tanker bug that's been brought up to the rim. Johnny sees another.

JOHNNY
Looks like they're gonna hose us down...

Johnny chews on this.

JOHNNY
Alright... Listen up, Roughnecks. We're gonna head west down through bug city, pick up any Rodger Young survivors we run across, and join A Company. Get me?

ROUGHNECKS
We get you, sir!

Zander, awkward in a power suit, confronts Johnny.

ZANDER
What do you think you're doing?

JOHNNY
I'm gonna save Carmen.

ZANDER
That would mean a complete disregard for the mission objective. They hang you for that, Rico.

JOHNNY
Yeah, that's right.

Johnny and Zander stare each other down.

ZANDER
Let's go.

JOHNNY
Move out.

ACE
BUG HUNT!

ROUGHNECKS
BUG HUNT!

INT BUG CITY TUNNELS -- DAY -- JOHNNY

leads the Roughnecks through a labyrinth of bug infested tunnels. Roughnecks mow down any bugs that get in their way. Zander lends his inexperienced hand.

JOHNNY
Mr. Barcalow, save power, don't waste it on workers... Ace, tell Aardvark we're on our way...

ACE
Got it, sir!

JOHNNY
Sugar, lay down gas... You, close the tunnel behind us...!

This is the Roughnecks at their best, Johnny in command, a deadly force moving through enemy territory.

INT BUG CITY -- FEEDING PIT -- DAY -- CARMEN

opens her eyes. She can hear BUGS CLICKING. She's in a pit filled with human dead. A nearby carcass wears a uniform from 4th Brigade. Off in the dark she hears HUMAN MOANING.

She crawls over the rotting corpses toward the sound. The moaning turns to SCREAMING. It's coming from outside the pit. She pulls herself up to peer over the edge.

INT BUG CITY -- THE ROYAL COURT -- DAY -- CARMEN

sees hundreds of bugs at work, WARRIORS, WORKERS and dozens of small (2 meters) CHARIOT BUGS. A worker walks past, stepping on her, but pays her no attention.

She sees the source of the screaming: Captain Deladier is held between two warriors, and she's screaming because of what she sees.

DELADIER
NAAAAAAAAA...! OH PLEASE...

The BRAIN BUG is huge (5 meters) and pulpy. It has vestigial legs that cannot support its weight, and so it must be moved by a shifting carpet of chariot bugs.

DELADIER
...OH GOD AAAAAAAAAAAAAA...!

A thorn-like PALP unfolds out of the brain bug and strikes, driving deep into Deladier's head and sucks her brains out.

DELADIER
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Carmen watches horrified as the Deladier dies. Then suddenly a warrior grabs her from above and drags her out of the pit. She screams as its claws slice into her limbs.

CARMEN
AAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Now the brain bug comes for her. She sees the palp unfold, the thorn-like spike coming toward her. Carmen is no longer looking for escape. All she wants to do is die.

Suddenly, every bug in the chamber stops as though to listen. Carmen hears it. A HIGH-PITCHED SQUEAL, getting louder. Johnny enters the chamber alone.

The warriors move toward him. He hold up a NUKE, source of the high-pitched tone. The ready light flashes. The Brain Bug emits a series of harsh clicks. The warriors freeze.

JOHNNY
You know what this is...?

Johnny makes an explosion sound. The Brain Bug slowly withdraws it's palp.

JOHNNY
Sure you do... You're a big fat smart bug, aren't you?

Johnny moves toward Carmen. The Brain Bug's multiple eyes track him. The warriors holding Carmen threaten. Johnny turns on the brain bug, his finger on the nuke's trigger.

JOHNNY
I'll take you with me.

The Brain Bug clicks. The warriors back off. Carmen collapses. Johnny reaches for her.

JOHNNY
Take my hand!

Chariot bugs move the Brain Bug down a hole. Workers seal the hole behind it with amazing speed. Johnny drags Carmen back toward the tunnel he entered from. The warriors charge.

JOHNNY
Roughnecks... NOW!

Johnny throws himself on top of Carmen as the Roughnecks burst into the chamber, guns blazing. The fight is furious, point blank, deadly to bug and Roughneck alike.

Zander takes a claw in the gut. Sugar Watkins screams as a warrior rips his arm off. He blows it away, keeps on fighting. A warrior rears up over Johnny and Carmen.

JOHNNY
WEAPON!

Ace throws him a Morita. Johnny catches it, pumps three rounds into the bug's nerve stem. He struggles out from under the dead warrior. Every bug in the chamber is dead.

Ace tourniquets Sugar Watkins' arm, spikes him with morphine. Johnny pulls Carmen to her feet.

JOHNNY
Are you hurt?

Carmen throws her arms around Johnny.

CARMEN
I love you, Johnny Rico.

Zander takes this in. Carmen sees him, then his wound.

CARMEN
Zander...! Oh, you're hurt.

ZANDER
It's a scratch...

Ace takes a look at his wound, makes a face. Zander pushes him away, struggles to his feet.

JOHNNY
Can you walk?

ZANDER
(clenched teeth)
Don't worry about me.

JOHNNY
Let's get some armor on her, and then we'll get outa this stinkin bug hole!

Various components are gladly passed forward. Johnny and Ace help her put it on.

CARMEN
I thought I was dead. Lucky for me you jokers showed up, eh?

ZANDER
It wasn't luck. Rico ignored the mission objective to rescue you...

CARMEN
Is it true?

JOHNNY
Yeah, if I live through this, they'll probably hang me. Now com'on, let's move out!

INT BUG CITY TUNNELS -- DAY -- THE ROUGHNECKS

double-time it, racing for the surface. They come to a fork.

CARMEN
Which way?

JOHNNY
Up. We gotta be near A Company by now.

The tunnel floor drops out. FIVE ROUGHNECKS disappear into the hole. WARRIORS climb up into the tunnel.

JOHNNY
FALL BACK!

The Roughnecks back up shooting as fast as they can stagger. Zander collapses. Johnny drops to his side, rolls him over.

JOHNNY
How bad are you, buddy?

ZANDER
Been better, pal.

Johnny sees warriors coming up into the tunnel by the score.

JOHNNY
Alright, we're gonna carry you...

ZANDER
Nah, I figure you folks oughta get upstairs before it's too late... Gimmee the nuke.

Zander checks his pulse cannon's available power.

JOHNNY
Don't be a hero...

ZANDER
This is my farm. Now c'mon, give me what you got and get out of here...

Johnny nods, hands him the nuke. Carmen sees what's happening.

CARMEN
Zander, what are you doing?

ZANDER
Just giving you something to remember me by, baby.

CARMEN
Zander, no...!

He grabs her and kisses her. Johnny drags Carmen away. Zander opens fire as the first warriors reach his position.

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INT BUG CITY -- INCLINED TUNNEL -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND CARMEN

race desperately for the surface. They hear the chatter of Zander's pulse cannon and the screams of dying bugs.

JOHNNY
GO GO GO GO GO...!

Tears stream down Carmen's face.

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EXT PLANET P -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND CARMEN

and the surviving Roughnecks make it to the surface. WOMP! A subterranean nuclear explosion blows a column of earth and stone into the air.

EXT PLANET P -- A COMPANY BASE CAMP -- DAY -- JOHNNY

and the others enter A Company's perimeter. No one notices their arrival because everyone's gathered in a big circle watching the Brain Bug.

CARMEN
Look... they got it.

Several of its delicate legs were apparently broken during the capture. Carl approaches it without fear, puts his hand on the thing.

GENERAL
What's it thinking, Colonel?

Carl smiles in a cruel way.

CARL
It's afraid.

Johnny and Carmen approach the General.

JOHNNY
Sir, I'd like to turn myself in. Dereliction of duty by an officer during wartime.

GENERAL
And you freely admit to it?

JOHNNY
Yes, sir.

GENERAL
Is what this man says true, Lieutenant?

CARMEN
To the best of my understanding, it is, sir.

The General sighs, turns to his AIDE.

GENERAL
Round up a field court martial, wilya?

Carl steps in.

CARL
It's alright, sir. Acting Lieutenant Rico was under my orders... psi-orders.

The General smiles, relieved.

MAJOR
Oh, I see. Well, that's completely different. That's classified.

The General heads away. Carl winks at his friends.

JOHNNY
You always told me you couldn't do human...

CARL
I can't... but like I told you, it's a number's game. The Federation needs all the pilots it can get...

CARMEN
I don't know why, but every time the three of are together I feel like everything's gonna be alright.

CARL
I hope you're right, Carmen. We've got one of their brains now. Pretty soon we'll know how they think, and then we'll know how to beat them. One day it'll be over, and everyone will forget that this was the moment. This is when it turned. And it wasn't the mighty Fleet, it wasn't any fancy new weapon, it was a cap trooper named Zim who captured a brain...

JOHNNY
Zim...?

Johnny sees a knot of soldiers around Zim, who is smiling, self-conscious as admirers shake his hand, pound his back. Johnny rushes to congratulate him.

JOHNNY
Hey, Sergeant Zim. Good job!

Zim turns, gives Johnny a wry look. He wears the single stripes of a private.

ZIM
Thank you, sir.

Zim snaps to attention, salutes. Johnny has to smile.

JOHNNY
Carry on, private!

FROM THE FEDERAL NET -- AND SO THE WAR GOES ON!

Starships parked row-by-row in the floating yards above Luna. Meanwhile, at Camp Currie, cap troopers train.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Armed with more soldiers, more ships, and with a unity unmatched in all of human history, the Federation marches on!

TECHNOLOGY -- NEW WEAPONS!

Federation scientists are hard at work.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Better gas to kill bugs with and, soon, the capacity to crack a planet in half with just one bomb!

ENLIST NOW!

Proud YOUNG PEOPLE in uniform, the bloom of human evolution.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Citizenship now guaranteed to all able applicants. Put your plans on hold to fight for the future! Protect your continued right to evolve! Would you like to know more?

INT STARSHIP SPARTA -- THE BRIDGE -- CAPTAIN CARMEN IBANEZ

stands on the bridge of a brand new starship, the Sparta.

CARMEN
We're over the target area now, Lieutenant!

INT SPARTA -- DROP ROOM -- LIEUTENANT JOHNNY RICO

looks his Roughnecks over before the drop.

JOHNNY
Saddle up, Roughnecks!

ACE
You heard the Lieutenant! On the bounce, troopers!

One thing's for sure: They'll keep fighting, and they'll win!

END